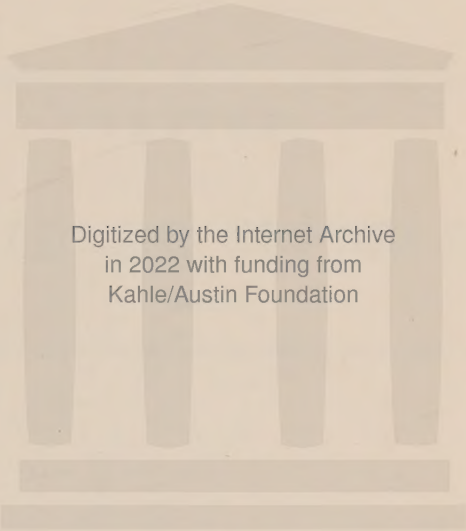




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LETTERS
OF
MAD. DE SÈVIGNÈ.
VOL. III.

C. L. B.

5 C. L. H.
LETTERS

from
FROM

1907 218
MAD. DE SEVIGNÉ,

TO HER DAUGHTER THE
COUNTESS OF GRIGNAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,
BY MRS. MACKIE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

At least, ye Nine, her spotless name
'Tis yours from death to save,
And in the temple of immortal Fame,
In golden characters her worth engrave.
Tell how each beauty of her mind and face
Was brighten'd by some sweet peculiar grace.
How eloquent in every look,
Thro' her expressive eyes, her soul distinctly spoke.
Tell how her manners by the world refin'd,
Left all the taint of modish vice behind,
And made each charm of polish'd Courts agree
With candid Truth's simplicity,
And uncorrupted innocence.
Tell how to more than manly sense
She join'd the soft'ning influence
Of more than female tenderness.

LYTTLETON.

VOL. III.

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THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

1802.

LETTERS

OF

MAD. DE SEVIGNE

LETTER CCXLVII.

To the same.

Whitsunday.

YOU give the same kind of attention to history that I give to my beads. You cannot discover what Justin treats of. Little de Bias said that she found something concerning St. Paul's conversion in the end of Quintus Curtius. You might very well say as much. I wish you could have Corbinelli with you at present, he would amuse you—as for me I find the days of an inconceivable length; seven, eight, nine hours, appear to take no effect. When some of my provincial ladies come, I quickly take my work, not thinking them worthy of walking in my woods, I conduct them to the gate, the lady mounts her pillion behind her Knight, and away they go to supper, and I set out to take my walk.

I have just received a letter from Madame de Vins—you are the tie which binds our intimacy. She is tormented with law-suits, which she laments, because they prevent her going to Pomponne. She seeks no comfort but in the bosom of her family. I send you a part of your brother's letter; you will see in four words the state of his mind. I hear from other quarters that the Court is full of gaiety, but pleasure seems banished from it. Madame de Maintenon's favour seems to increase. Madame de Montespan's visibly declines, and Fontanges is at the summit.

Madame de la Fayette writes to me that she is still more affected by the loss of M. de la Rochefoucault, than she ever imagined she would be, considering the necessary attention she must pay to her health and the fortune of her sons; but these cares have been superseded by the real affliction she feels. She is alone in the world—she regrets my absence exceedingly. I should have done my duty upon an occasion such as this, which rarely occurs in a long life. That poor woman cannot *close the ranks* in a way to fill up his place—'Nothing can restore what she has lost.' She quotes that line which I have often in my mind applied to her.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks.

MY dear child there is fallen to me from the clouds a most beautiful Chapelet—* it is certainly because I say it so well—the ball to the best player. This mysterious Chapelet is accompanied by a diamond cross, which is very handsome, and a death's head of coral. I think it is an old acquaintance—let me know how it happens to have passed through so many countries to come to me; in the mean time I shall not count my beads without many fond reveries, and I fear I shall be less attentive than usual. I beg to have your answer upon this subject.

Have you heard the story of Madame de St. Pouanges? It was concealed from me a long time, lest I should be afraid of returning to Paris at night. This poor little woman was going to Fontainebleau. She was in a hurry to enjoy all her advantages and full of expected pleasure. She possesses a desirable

* A string of beads used by Catholics when they repeat their prayers.

place at Court, is naturally gay—she had the additional delight of setting out at six o'clock in the evening, and travelling post, that she might arrive at midnight, which is the height of the fashion—but mark the end. She was overturned upon the road, and received a wound from the glass which is likely to have the most dangerous consequences. I hear from Paris that she is despairing both from her sufferings, and from the faculty, and the affliction of dying so young. Perhaps you have heard this terrible story—it has made a deep impression upon my brain.

Saturday, June 15.

I CANNOT answer to what you say of my letters, only I am delighted to hear that they please you. I never have the courage to read them over, and often say, good God how I pity my daughter for being obliged to read such a number of trifles. You are very kind in wishing I had company, but I really do not want any, I am quite accustomed to my solitude. My workmen amuse me; the good Abbé has a set of his own. His taste for building sometimes outsteps his prudence—certainly the expence he incurs is not great, but it would be still less if he did nothing.

I am reading the Christian conversations; they are written by a good Cartesian, who knows by

heart your *Search after Truth*, and who talks of that philosophy.* I will inform you if this book is above my understanding; if it is, I shall humbly leave it, renouncing the foolish vanity of pretending to be more clever than I really am.

In a letter to Madame de Vins the other day, I gave her to guess what virtue I practised most at the Rocks, and then told her it was liberality. It is certain that I have given away large sums since my arrival; one morning eight hundred francs, another a thousand, another five, another three hundred crowns. It seems a jest, but it is only too true. Farmers and millers owe me these sums, and have not a shilling. What can one do but forgive them the debt? You may believe I do not make a great merit of this, since I do it by force. The other day a handsome farmer's wife from Bodegat came to me. She had a fine pair of sparkling eyes, a fine shape, a gown of fine Holland, with open sleeves over a tabinet. Oh Heavens, I thought myself ruined. She owes me eight thousand francs. Your husband would have been in love with this pretty woman—she resembles one he admired at Paris.

This morning a peasant came in loaded with bags on all sides—he had some under his arms, some in

* Descartes.

his waistcoat pockets, and his breeches; and in this country that is the first part they untie before you, and those who do not, have the most singular dress in the world. The good Abbè thought our fortune was made—‘My friend,’ said he, ‘you are well loaded, how much have you brought?’ ‘I believe Sir,’ said the man, ‘there may be about thirty francs.’* In fact, my dear, it was all the Doublons in France that have taken refuge in this province, and which are destined to try our patience.

You have gratified me much by mentioning Mongobert. I thought your own good sense would lead you to make up matters with her. It is thus, my dear child, you ought always to do; for in spite of the little vexations she gives you, Montgobert loves you sincerely—but her temper is unpleasant and violent. I set the highest value upon the qualities of the heart. We are obliged to bear a great deal even in the happiest attachments—it is what I call the dependencies of friendship, which are not always agreeable. You will soon have M. de Coulanges with you—he will play his part admirably—he will tell you his plans of which I am ignorant. He hates solitude so much that he will not even write to those who are in retirement. Grignan is the place to charm him. Adieu my

* A franc is worth about ten pence.

dearest, let me know if you mean to part with Paulina. Keep her always with you—she is an extraordinary child, educate her in an extraordinary manner.

LETTER CCXLIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, June 21, 1680:

THE bad weather still continues, and we have only intervals enough to procure us a good wetting. We venture out trusting to a summer's sun, and mistake a bright moment for amended weather.

I hear from Paris that the King's conversations with Madame de Maintenon go on better and better, that they last from six o'clock till ten. The daughter-in-law sometimes makes a short visit there, and finds them each seated in their arm chairs, and when her visit is over, they resume their conversations. Madame de Coulanges writes me, that Madame de Maintenon is now approached with the highest respect, and the Ministers return her the Court which is paid them.

Madame de la Sabliere is in her convent, per-

fectly cured of a malady, * which has lately been thought incurable—it is the most desirable of recoveries—she is in the happiest state—she is become devout, and truly so. She makes a good use of her free will—but is it not God that has done this? he changed her heart, he led her into the paths of devotion, and supports her in them. If this is what you call *le libre arbitre*, † I consent to believe in it—we must read again St. Augustine's writings. To return to Madame de Coulanges—she takes Madame de la Fayette to visit Madame de le Sabliere. Perhaps that is the best method to make the former feel that her grief is not incurable. Till now she has appeared insensible to every thing, even to her son's concerns, but who knows what awaits her. That is what I say in regard to your brother—how can I find a wife for him? He is now attached to his fat cousin. He talks of her in the drollest manner. Is that the road to fortune? See how that little Cheverni, with his ugly countenance, and his plain good sense and cold manners, has found means to be liked by Madame de Colbert, who gives him her niece—be assured you will soon hear that his estates are all freed, his debts paid, and himself delivered from poverty, which certainly stared him in the face—but characters cannot be altered, and every thing happens as it

* Love.

† Free agency.

pleases Providence to ordain it. Your brother's destiny is enveloped in such a cloud, that I cannot form an idea of what it will be. I see no grandchildren coming to me from that quarter, but I see yours that are charming and already come, and I see your health much improved which delights me; but I entreat you, my dearest and best beloved, not to trust too much to this amendment, but to live in fear of a relapse.

I am at present plagued with a visit from a Madame de la Hameliere, whose husband is our relation. This woman is a sort of beauty—you saw her once at Paris. She has now a lover that she encourages openly. She spends three or four months with him at his country house—she is now on her way to Paris and Bourbon, to meet this man, and travels in his carriage—she came with six beautiful grey horses belonging to this Marquis—she talks of him incessantly—she lives very little with her husband, whose estates are at nurse, as our cousin has ruined himself like a fool by living in his castle. This woman who has no earthly business, passes her time in making visits. She is come twenty leagues, and dropt down upon me like a bomb, at the hour I least expected it. At first I hid myself, in my woods in my old way, to put off the evil hour, but at last I was obliged to appear. I found this fine lady, whose person I scarcely knew, with a party like that of Madame de Chevericé, at Fréne; a young girl all

over curls (a little Huguenot) and another awkward creature. The sight of these people put me in one of my odd humours, and I treated them with an affected over done civility, and at times with a bluntness which they took for fashion. At length supper came, and to stop my eternal gapings I amused myself with disputing on religion with the young girl—that roused me. These women have already been here three days, and I hope are not refined enough to be pleased with the liberty I take of doing what I like, of visiting my workmen, and writing. I trust Madame will be affronted, and thus I look forward to a charming adieu, which it is impossible to feel with agreeable visitors. This groupe is come to me, and God knows when they will depart. I shall certainly not press them to stay. I entreat you, my dear child, not to answer to all this. Mademoiselle du Plessis is still in her Convent—if you could but see how well she acts the deepest affliction, she who stole her mother's strong box while the poor woman was expiring, you would laugh. All the vices and virtues are thrown together in these provinces. I really think that the ^{ge} of the peasantry have a tendency to virtue, minds naturally follow the right path. The hand that and natura. These things over the Universe, knew dispensed the, and makes every thing conducive what it was about, is right.

Wednesday, June 26.

THE walks I take here remind me most sensibly of your absence, and in a more melancholy manner than you can possibly feel mine, in the midst of your little republic—for the company at Grignan is so numerous and so excellent in its kind, that it must afford far more dissipation than Paris. The little addition to your apartment there, is finished. Will you like to hear more of Madame de la Hameliere's visit? She staid seven whole days, and only left me yesterday. I envied a little the grey ponies she sported in my court-yard. The ease and familiarity of this woman are wonderful—she is gone back to her Marquiss's house, from whence she came; yet your good cousin, her husband, still adores her, and seems to admire the Marquis quite as much as his lady does. I was in bed when she went away, but the noise of her equipage announced the happy hour.

May Heaven preserve to you, my dear child, the good and rational thoughts with which it has inspired you. You reason with so much good sense upon all the pleasures of this life, and upon what is not within our reach, that Christian philosophy can teach no more. *'I know many more miserable than us.'* You are most truly amiable, and worthy, and as such both esteemed and beloved.

LETTER CCL.

To the same.

At the Rocks, June 30, 1680.

THIS month has not appeared to me so immensely long as the last; that is probably because I have seen so few objects. I have been confined to these woods, where the imagination has but little food. Your brother writes to me that he was going to play at Reversis with his young master.* This makes me tremble—two, three, four hundred pistoles, are easily lost at that game. ‘*It is nothing for Admetus, but a great deal for him.*’ If Dangeau is of the party he will win all the pools, for he is a perfect eagle. The event must be left to Providence, and to that Sovereign will, I must also resign the hopes I had of receiving six thousand francs from Nantes—some evil spirit has raised new difficulties, and now we are further from the point than ever.

I can see by the letters that I receive from Paris, that the retired and formal life the Dauphiness leads, is not to her taste—if her complaisance was not extreme, and her temper so easy, she might be said to

* The Dauphin.

be under great restraint. Little do we know the feelings of her, who fills the most desirable situation in the world. That of Danaé * is another subject of wonder. The shower of gold is certainly very abundant—none of her sisters equal her in beauty, but they are not the less favoured by the advantages of fortune and great establishments. You pity Madame de Vins too much for being confined to the society of her family, it is her natural taste; she is accustomed to a retired life—the solidity of her understanding is now of infinite use to her. Our friend Guitaut is fortunate, for he is devout; what can I add to the admirable things you say upon that subject, but that we are proofs of human ignorance and human weakness. The thought of eternity strikes me more forcibly than you, because I am nearer my last hour; yet it does not inspire me with more warmth and zeal in my devotions. I am well convinced that misfortunes and sorrows are showered upon the world. Corbinelli is convinced that every body is equally happy and miserable. I dont know if M. de Luxembourg will be of that opinion; I fancy he knows very ill how to bear being disgraced, and in exile, he had made no provision for such a change of fortune. Madame de Coulanges tells me, she was going to Lyons, and

* Madame de Fontanges.

would not pass through Fontainebleau, having laid down her court manners, and taken up her provincial ones. She says the King spends hours in Madame de Maintenon's apartment. Father de la Chaise is there at the same time as his Majesty. Madame de Fontanges weeps every day at being no longer beloved. All the favours that have been heaped upon herself and family, cannot comfort her—this is provision for our bag of reflexions. You have heard that the Cardinal d'Estrees is going to Rome—the Pope has written a letter to the King, which is worthy of St. Peter. It is said that his Majesty begins to be tired of the Archbishop of Paris, or rather of the life he leads*—he will be forsaken like the mistresses. It is curious in me to write you Paris news from hence, but Brittany affords nothing, and I talk over what I hear from my friends. Here, however, are two considerable events—the Princess of Tarente is daily expected, and the Duke and Duchess of Chaulnes will be at Rennes in a week. They have ordered the roads to Vittrè to be repaired, and every day two or three hundred men are at work. They are assisted by the advice of our coachman, that they may make a road *as smooth as this chamber*.

Yesterday a young man came here from Vittrè;

* A man of a most dissolute character.

he gave me a printed paper containing the wonderful things he could do with fire. Amongst a hundred miraculous things, I shall only mention a trifling one which was soon done. He poured into his mouth ten or twelve drops of my Spanish sealing wax, flaming, and did not seem any more affected by it than if it had been water—he did not even make a grimace, and his tongue appeared as clear as before the operation. I had often heard of these wonders, but to see them thus familiarly performed, in my chamber, seemed really surprising. This is a proof of your philosophy, my dear child; fire is certainly not hot, and only gives us the sensation of burning by the disposition of the parts it meets with. Can you believe that there is any sort of liquid with which one can rub the inside of the mouth, so as to pour with perfect confidence flaming wax into it, swallow boiling oil, and walk upon red hot bars of iron? What after this will become of our miracles?

I embrace you, my dear child, and bid you adieu but always with regret. In spite of all the obscurity which pervades your destiny, I still hope that we shall meet this winter.

LETTER CCLI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 7, 1680:

OUR friend Coulanges is going to Lyons with his wife, and from thence to Grignan. He promises me the most exact description of your looks. He gives me droll accounts of the moping, formal and wholesome life he spent at Bourbon, it nearly killed him, and he is trying to recover at Paris by the assistance of late hours, ragouts, and indigestions; in taking these remedies he is indefatigable. He wonders that I was able to resist the tiresome forms of Bourbon. Madame de la Troche writes to me that the coldness towards Madame de Fontange is extreme, and that Montespan is more jealous of the friendship and confidence shewn by the King to Madame de Maintenon, than of the flashes of passion he felt for the other, whose genius and wit are by no means formidable. She could easily get the better of beauty alone, but a great understanding, and all the charms of conversation are dreadful rivals, and vex her to the soul. She is sadly treated by both parties—but what say you to the event of the Princess of Conti's marriage, on which the fairies seemed to have lavished all their

gifts. The Princess of Tarente is come—I visited her, and she gave me the warmest reception, and shewed me your letter. She says you describe her heart as if you had seen it. Her daughter is delighted with being in Germany, and at having quitted Denmark. She is charmed with her husband and his riches. The young Princess was rather in a hurry to marry, before the signatures of all her family arrived, at which her mother is angry, but I laugh at her. The Princess tells us that a nobleman was chosen to dance with the Dauphiness, who performed so well, was so handsome, and dressed with so much elegance, that finding the lady talked of him too often, the King said to him with severity, ‘ You seem to wish to make my son jealous, but I would not advise you to attempt it.’ This speech, as you may suppose, put an end to all dancing and gallantry. I hear many other trifles of this kind which cannot be trusted to a letter. The Princess tells me that her niece* has taken a violent inclination to her husband’s brother,† and does not know what is the matter with her,

* Elizabeth of Bavaria, Duchess of Orleans; she was mother to the famous Regent of France. Some fragments of her letters to her family in Germany, have been preserved and lately published.

Note of the Translator.

† The King.

but her aunt is not so ignorant. We laughed heartily at this malady, for which she cannot find a name, and which affects her so violently. It is a hard master that makes its slaves feel according to their different characters. She is like young de la Fayette who used to say he was all God knows how—yet continued paying visits while he had a paroxysm of fever upon him. This poor Duchess of Orleans feels neither joy or sorrow, but as far as they are connected with her being in or out of favour with the King. She cares little for what passes in her family, except when she can make the events that happen an excuse to complain to his Majesty. I cannot tell you in what an original, droll, and confidential manner this neighbour of mine told me these particulars. War is much talked of, which I much dislike. The Prince of Condé is going to Lisle, and he seldom moves without a good reason. It is thought however, that our King will no sooner set out than the King of Spain will relinquish the title of Duke of Burgundy, and our enemies will humble themselves—here are many things which do not concern us, but we may talk them over.

We are dying with heat—I dread your thunder storms—they are more violent than ours. I think of the child near you that was burnt by the lightning. Such an accident has happened at Livry—Apropos of Livry, last year they were devoured

with caterpillars; this year they are infested with robbers, who assassinate travellers in the forest. Father Payen was robbed the other day, and so much beaten, that it is thought he cannot recover. If I ever again have the comfort of your company at the Rocks, I think you will admire the two charming recesses which I have had erected in these woods. Adieu, I embrace M. de Grignan, and the young ladies whom I love and esteem. As for you, my dearest, what shall I say to you, for all my words are exhausted, but my sentiments are beyond expression, and I trust you are convinced of it.

LETTER CCXLII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 17, 1680.

I WISH more ardently than ever to see you again; the obscurity which now pervades your affairs will soon be dispelled. You will have all your family with you in September. Mademoiselle de Grignan will be the first to promote your removal—how sincerely I honour her resolution* and virtues. I

* M. de Grignan's daughter by a first wife, who resolved to devote herself to a religious life.

must talk of your sweet grotto La Rochecourbiere. You made a pleasant party there—I wish I could thank them for having drank my health. Yours was drank yesterday at the Princess of Tarente's—it was in her park—there was a great deal of company, and we had an immense collation of different meats, which puts me in despair on account of the consequences. I asked her what she could mean by thus ruining herself and me in collations, instead of thinking of returning to Paris. We were very merry on the subject. She always tells me she is going to write to you. She is cutting her pens, for her ceremonious writing is a perfect embroidery, and is not performed in a hurry. We should be obliged to shorten our epistles, if we were to amuse ourselves with twisting our d's and l's in the manner she does.

Madame de Coulanges wrote to me after her return from St. Germain—she is still surprised at the sort of favour that Madame de Maintenon enjoys. No friend can have more attentions for another than the King has for her. She makes him acquainted with a new country, that is, she discovers to him the charms of friendship, and a conversation free from contradiction and restraint, he appears delighted. Madame de Coulanges continues to be charmed with the Dauphiness, who has treated her with the greatest distinction and familiarity, but she is just now disgusted with the world, and the

favour of the Great pleases her no more. She is going to Lyons; thus there are times when we find nothing valuable in life. Madame de Fontanges is gone to Chelles. She had an immense retinue; four coaches and six—her own carriage had eight horses—all her sisters were with her, but they were a dull party, and excited compassion. The beautiful Fontanges, pale, emaciated, and only half alive, overcome with affliction and disappointment, dispensing forty thousand crowns, with the honour of setting in the Queen's presence, and wishing only for health and the King's affection which she has lost—your Prior of Cabriere has made a fine cure there, I think this beauty is a singular instance of good and bad fortune. I hear that Madame d'Heudicourt is at Court, ugly as sin, and obliged to support herself with a cane. She is just recovered from a severe illness—in my mind there are few maladies I would not prefer to the rage of appearing at Court in her situation.

It is certain that I hate restraint still more than you do. I make people visit me in my own way, or else avoid them and their ceremony. The fine Madame de la Hameliere who visited me did not like walking. I left her very quietly for three hours at a time, and when I returned found her in violent fits of laughing with my waiting women—that was all she required. She was a pretty fool, at whose departure I rejoiced.

Madame de Coulanges teases your brother with her epigrams. He has the gift, as you observe, of rendering the best things pernicious; his stay at Fontainebleau has rather done him harm than good.

LETTER CCLIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 21, 1680.

I DO not approve of your saying that your letters are stupid and insipid; those are words that cannot be applied to you—but if you wish to please me, let Montgobert write and rest yourself upon your sofa. Your brother played me a very provoking trick the other day—he wrote to me that he had lost two hundred and sixty Louis at Reversis, and this with so many circumstances that I firmly believed it. The next post relieved me from my anxiety, but it was a silly jest—to what purpose give me such an emotion. I felt at the same time that such an event might be but too true in a quarter* which interests me still more. I can assure you that a perfect friendship might be formed out

* Alluding to the high play at Grignan.

of the tender sentiments which I hide from you. Our friend Coulanges has promised me to examine your person so narrowly, that he will be able to give me a complete account of your health. You will compose songs together, send them to me and I will answer them in bad prose.

The good Princess comes to see me without previous notice, to avoid the plague of great dinners. She took me by surprise on Friday—we walked a great deal together, and at the end of the mall a little collation made its appearance, and had a very good effect. She complained to me of her daughter's folly in not having added a sovereignty to their family arms. I laughed at her and told her such language would do very well in Germany, but was quite out of character at the Rocks. I made her own that her daughter had done very well. She was so much surprised to meet with any body who contested a point with her, that it was quite a pleasure. The King and Queen of Denmark visit the Count of Oldembourg in his little dominions. He defrays the expences of the whole Court, and his magnificence surpasses even that of a Prince. I have seen the Countess's letters, they are full of love for her husband, good sense, generosity, and justice. Good God, (I said to her mother) what more can you wish, since with all this your daughter is both contented and rich? One would really

imagine I was paid to support the cause of this young Countess.

I hear that Madame de Fontanges continues in deep melancholy; her place seems to be vacant, and she a kind of invalid displaced from the service like Madame de Ludre. Yet they will neither of them frighten any body from following their steps. Mademoiselle du Plessis is returned upon my hands from her Convent. What more need I say?

You wish for me when you have music and gaiety, and you are right, since that is your mother's taste, and I between eight and nine o'clock wish for you in my woods, and say Oh how my daughter would enjoy this silence and solitude. Nothing more natural than these different wishes.

It is said that the King is to leave the ladies at Lisle, and will go, I know not where, with the Prince of Condé. If the Dutch were in the league I fancy he would enjoy giving them another drubbing, but without that it cannot be supposed that he would break a treaty which has cost him all the rest of Flanders, that he was on the point of conquering. You have sent me a maxim which I admire—*it is more polite to love than to praise*—I cannot help doing both, when I think of my dear daughter.

LETTER CCLIV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 28, 1680.

I MUST have forgot to tell you in my last that the man who danced so well, was the Duke of Villeroi. I am happy to hear that my letters entertain you so much. The prudence of your other correspondents is the real cause of the great success of my imprudence; if they were less cautious they might tell you more than I can. There is something droll in my sending you news of the Court from this solitude. My letters are in the Gazette style, since they contain articles from Copenhagen, and Oldembourg—in fact I tell you every thing.

I have written the story of Father Payen to Mademoiselle de Grignan. If instead of reasoning with the robber, he had said ‘Alas, Sir, I am only taking a walk,’ he might have still been safe in his Convent. We have been exposed to great dangers in the forest of Livry, and wonderfully preserved. Charming days have we past in *in questa diletta parte al cielo si cara*.* I do not pity you my dear

* In that delightful spot to Heaven so dear.

child in your present situation ; it is I that deserve compassion, since I am separated from you at an age when I have no time to lose. The good Abbé would be very glad to drink of the wine you mention, which would add ten years to his life. It would be both pleasant to drink the wine, and to grow young. He was the other day all covered with nosegays in honour of his Saint's day. We remembered the pretty verses you made last year ; although seventy four he is in good health—you say you are equally well—God grant it may be so.

Wednesday, July 31.

I GAVE the Princess of Tarente a handsome collation on Monday. I called for my neighbours' assistance, and obtained seven brace of partridges which are still a rarity here—all the rest of the repast was good and genteel. The good Madame Marbœuf was here—she is going back to Rennes to the Duke de Chaulnes who, with his Duchess, sent to know if we would allow them to pay their compliments to us here. The Princess sent a pompous message in her style, but I sent a plain negative, and added that I would pay my respects to them with the Princess, who meant to make them a present of a visit, not having the least desire of drawing their suite here. She is delighted that in this laughing way I have saved her so much

trouble and expence. When we were at table together on Monday, we vowed never to give any more such suppers. I have closed the Temple of Janus. Mongobert writes me descriptions of your great entertainments—never was your Castle more brilliant; but I should find it difficult to name a place in it proper for a supper party at this season. I know of none but the grotto, the terrace, or the meadow—I have eat there most excellent things—exquisite Ortolans, the fat of which annoyed me as much as the smell of Orange flowers did you at Hieres.* We feel nothing of the excessive heats you mention—the rain prevents our making hay which occasions great lamentations. The other day a young man from Anjou (whose father I knew very well) came to visit me. I saw a handsome youth well dressed, and with a certain elegance in his manners which I delight in—but alas when he opened his mouth, I was in despair—he laughed at every thing he said, and appeared so very foolish that I was tempted to weep over him—he has a tint of Paris manners, knows something of the fashionable operas, sings a little, is free and easy, and murders with an air of confidence some lines of a song.

Adieu my dearest and most amiable child; you

* Near Toulon, reckoned the mildest climate in France.

say you like the trifles with which I fill my letters. Here are plenty in this one—those who order you to breakfast at seven o'clock should also provide you with an appetite for that hour.

LETTER CCLV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 4, 1680.

YOU engage me to write you long letters by assuring me that when they are of an immense length, you find them too formidable to attempt answering with your own hand.

The star which presides over feasts, sheds its influence on this part of the world in spite of my resistance. You have heard my complaints, for we really make eating quite a serious business, and follow but too much the customs of our ancestors. The Princess took me Thursday to dine at the house of a very agreeable woman at Vitré, (remark that I was particularly invited). We were received at a charming country place, and treated with one of the finest dinners I have seen these many years; all the rarest meats and most beautiful fruit that Rennes could produce—game, doves, &c. peaches, and pears as fine as at Rambouillet. We were

amazed, and perfectly understood that with money any thing may be accomplished; a truth of which the Princess and I were pretty well convinced before.

We go to-morrow to Rennes together, and such immense preparations are making for our reception, that I shall not be surprised if we are named in the *Mercure Galant*.

I should like to complain to Father Malebranche of the *mice* that eat every thing here. Is that in his order of things? What all our good sweetmeats, fruit, &c.? Last year was it proper that caterpillars should devour all the leaves of our forest trees at Livry, and of our gardens, and poor Father Payen, who was returning quietly home, was it proper that he should be murdered? Yes, worthy Malebranche, it is all right; the Almighty orders every thing for the best; we see not the reasons, but it is no less true. I beg M. de Grignan would pardon this apostrophe to the good Father, who I am convinced laughs at us when he says such things—besides there are many parts of his book where he says precisely the contrary.

Rennes, Tuesday, August 6.

I MUST describe to you the manner in which the Princess of Tarente was received here. The Duke and Duchess of Chaulnes sent a Captain of the Guards to meet her with forty men. They were followed by the Governor himself, and a number of the nobility. We stopped—the whole company saluted each other—so much heat, so many tongues, so many questions, made us quite unintelligible—at length we advanced and were stunned with trumpets and drums, and an immense crowd of people. We had in our suite six coaches and six, and more than ten with four horses. My next description will be of a great dinner, and as elegant a supper—a continuation of the same pleasures, much noise, many trumpets, violins, and such an air of royalty, that you must conclude that the Government of Brittany is a very fine thing. However I have seen you in your little Provence, and once received at Lambesc, as well by as many noblemen as attended M. de Chaulnes here. This scene makes me reflect upon the different situations in which Providence has placed us. You are receiving your Court in Provence, and I am come here to pay mine.

Wednesday Morning.

I DINED and supped at the Governor's, and feasted as much as ever—have made a thousand visits of propriety, have been to the Convents; in short, going, coming, complimenting without end, and so perfectly worn out with forms, that like the lady of honour I am in danger of losing my senses; that is the life we led yesterday. My impatience is extreme to leave this place, where too many honours are paid me. Adieu my dear child, I must dine to day at the Bishop of Rennes—no end of feasting. Good God, when shall I have the comfort of starving and holding my tongue. I shall write to you from the Rocks where I hope to return to-morrow.

Rennes, Saturday 10.

HERE I am still expending as I told you the other day all my wit in penny pieces, not a grain of gold in any thing we say. Reason and connection are banished from conversation in our present circle. I should have accompanied the Princess who left us yesterday, if the First President was not expected here this evening. I shall have an opportunity of seeing and conversing with him, and shall return home to-morrow if possible.

Your reflections upon the destiny of Mademoiselle de Noailles, are perfectly just. The judge-

ments which we form upon appearances are so frequently erroneous, that I wonder they are not totally given up.

All the Tongueducs are here. I wish you could but see how small a share of wit and beauty are requisite to charm your brother. His taste is execrable, which has always made me doubt his love for you and me. There is some little vanity in this speech, but it must pass. Adieu.

LETTER CCLVI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 18, 1680.

YOU have affected me, my dearest, by your account of Mademoiselle de Grignan. It is impossible not to be moved at hearing of her fortitude and virtue. I admire her resolution, and look upon her with respect and envy. The arrival of the Duke de Vendome will make a change in your affairs—you have now been Governors ten years—the advantages are not felt while possessed—but it is only by the privation that the value of such a situation is known. I should have lamented had I not visited you during your splendour.

I have to congratulate all the Grignan family

upon the death of the old Bishop of Evreux. We certainly did not wish him to die, but he has departed this life very apropos. The Chevalier obtains a thousand crowns, and the young prelate is in full possession of one of the best livings in France. The perfect union which subsists between every branch of your family, convinces me that Condé* will be one of your country houses.

I can conceive that you are afraid of enquiring into your immense expenditure—it is a machine that must not be touched lest it fall to pieces. The magnificent style of living in your Castle is supported by a kind of enchantment. You say the ruin is not very great, which I can scarcely believe. I am lost when I think of your management. It is like the poverty of courtiers, they never have a shilling, yet they accompany the King in all his excursions, make all the campaigns, follow all the fashions, attend all the balls, are in the lotteries, and go on with perfect ease, although completely ruined—I forgot to mention play which is a principal article. Their rents diminish every day, but that seems to make no difference—when it will be necessary to receive the Duke de Vendome, you will do it at an immense expence—if a generous action is to be performed you will do it, and if a

* The name of the house at Evreux, belonging to the bishoprick.

present is to be refused, you will shine there also. In short you can do any thing. I meditate but too much upon all this in the silence of my woods.

You will have a sight of our little friend Coulanges—in the midst of his gaiety you will find that he has many vexations, but they are not able to get the better of his lively constitution. I must now scold Mademoiselle de Grignan for having worn green and blue when she heard of our cousin's death. I behaved much better and wore a slight mourning at Rennes. In fact it was the only full dress I had with me. It was the most convenient thing in the world, and convinced all Brittany of the respect I bear my relations. Adieu my dear young ladies, I really long to embrace you—love me still, I assure you that I deserve your affection—as for the dear Count I embrace and condole with him on the horrid pain he has endured—to what varieties of sufferings are our poor bodies subject.

LETTER CCLVII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 28, 1680.

YES, certainly, my dear child, I am pleased to hear that you went to bed instead of writing to me; much as I love your letters, I love your repose better. Your brother arrived soon after I had dispatched my last letter to you—he brought some gentlemen with him who have now left us. Your brother has given me an account of a conversation that passed between him and M. de la Trousse—he set out with the idea (instilled by Blancas) of finding him all honey and sugar; but clouds soon spread over the horizon as soon as your brother began to speak, and at last things went so far, that La Trousse asked him why he ever entered the regiment. This reminds me of Hermione when she says to Orestes (after he had killed Pyrrhus by her order) who bid thee do it? Orestes flies into a violent rage, and I believe your brother would have done the same if his guardian angel had not supported him. We shall see how it will end—the best way will be to lay the whole business before M. de Louvois, and only give up this place for a better. This is all I can say at present.

I hear that the Queen is on a better footing at Court than usual, and that she has shewn so much complaisance and alacrity during the last journey, by going to see all the fortifications without complaining either of heat or fatigue—that she has obtained many little advantages by that wise conduct. I know not if some others of the party have done as well. The Dauphiness said the other day, talking of the Tragedy of Polyencte *, and admiring the character of the heroine, ‘Why really here is the most worthy woman in the world, who did not love her husband at all.’ Tell me, my dear child, how yours is, whom you love so well and so do I. How is his rheumatism? Can he yet embrace his friends with his left arm? As for me I use both mine in embracing him—but I press gently lest I should hurt him.

Monsieur du Plessis, and Mademoiselle de Launaye, often play at Ombre with us. We find much occupation in attending to our workmen, and as long as the second summer lasts, we cannot deserve compassion. When we chuse to read, M. du Plessis plays his part as well as he does at Ombre—he is extremely clever, and has a taste for what is witty and good.

Is it possible that M. de Vendome does not in-

* Corneille's Tragedy of that name. See Pauline, the principal female character in the piece.

tend to resume his government this year. The advantages which you reap from his absence, are not equal to the expence it occasions, when once you are to cross the Durance. I think your being no longer Governors would be a desirable event. I hope Providence will ordain that you may have something better. The good La Troche continues to tell me many little particulars—it is her son that attends the Dauphin. We might have heard from our Abbaye of Livry the music at Chelles, when the new Abbess was inducted. It is said that the beautiful Fontanges has been nearly poisoned, and so much alarmed as to have requested that guards might be sent to her. She is still in a declining state of health, but so attached to grandeur that we must imagine her character the exact contrast of the humble Violet*, who hid herself under the grass ashamed of being a mistress, a mother, and a Duchess—there will never be another like her. Adieu my dear, I admire what subjects I make choice of for your amusement, but it is to take off my attention to your complaints, which occupy my thoughts so much, that I should become tiresome by my repetitions. God grant that your health may be restored. If I was as holy a person as Madame de Vaudemont,

* Alluding to Madame de Valiere, the King's first mistress.

I should pray to the Almighty continually on that subject.

Monsieur de Sévigné to his sister.

IT shall not be said that a letter to you was sealed under my nose without my giving some signs of life. Good day, or good night, my dear sweet sister, according to the hour in which you receive this letter. We pass our time here with great ease and tranquillity. It is the aversion which I have very justly conceived against canopies, that makes me admire the rural pleasures of this country, and the brown horror of these woods. I often pass before the tree where I wrote *abi memoria*. Judge if my reveries are agreeable.

LETTER CCLVIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 11, 1680.

I COULD scarcely have believed that a letter which informs me that you will come this winter to Paris, and that I shall see you, would fill my eyes with tears; that however was the effect my

joy produced, aided indeed by the moving description of Mademoiselle de Grignan's pious sentiments. No, it is not always sorrow that makes us weep; tears proceed from a variety of sensations. How noble and tender are her expressions—what resolution and courage—you may surely depend upon her resolves. She has long meditated upon the subject, and is of a firm character as you have always said. Let me hear how the business goes on, and all your plans, that I may try to make mine correspond with them.

I was quite ignorant of the catastrophe which terminated the life of the old Bishop of Evreux. It has shocked me much—at eighty years of age, how singular that he should resume an equipage he had given up, purchase new horses, refuse having a postillion, be deaf to the remonstrances of all his friends, in short, be destined to so dreadful an end as being torn to peices.

You are perfectly overwhelmed with visitors this year; your acquaintance seem to have agreed to fall upon you all together. Every day two tables with twenty covers each—yet when you tell me that you spend nothing at Grignan, you cannot expect me to believe you. High play must have its share in the ruin—how does that go on? I always compare your losses to those small rains which wet us to the skin—but now, my dear child, let your mind enjoy peace, and your imagination rest upon

the certainty of this great affair. * As for me I declare myself delighted—my father used to say that he always loved his God with increased devotion when he was happy—in that I am certainly his daughter. It is thought the Dauphiness is pregnant. Madame de Maintenon's favour is still at the summit. The King only passes moments with the other ladies. The Beauty continues declining. The Bishop of Rennes called here the other day, and told me that at the consecration at Chelles, the magnificence of the ornaments, the jewels surrounding the sun over the altar, the exquisite music, the perfumes, and the quantity of bishops that officiated, surprised a lady so much, who had never left her village, that she exclaimed aloud, 'Surely this is Paradise.' 'No, Madam,' answered one of her neighbours, 'so many bishops will not be found there.'

I entreat you to say a great deal from me to the Archbishop; you can answer for the truth of my sentiments. Remember me to M. de Grignan and his celestial daughter—I embrace the children. Montgobert tells me that Paulina was reading to her Voiture's letters, and understood them as well as we do.

* By Mademoiselle de Grignan's taking the veil, much fortune reverted to her father. The family projected visit to Paris was in consequence of that event.

LETTER CCLIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 15, 1680.

HOW much my heart is obliged to you for giving it so much ease by allowing me to expect you this winter. I have read your charming letter very often, and repeat with pleasure, it is my daughter that tells me she comes to Paris soon after All Saint's Day.

We have now a very pleasant party in the house, with whom we are able to make use of our reason, and enjoy intellectual gratification. You know how well I can listen. Monsieur de Montmorin is arrived, he is extremely clever. Father Damaie who resides twenty miles from hence, was also here. Your brother too is great in argument, added to this we had Corbinelli's letters. It was to please me they argued, and much was I amused. M. de Montmorin is perfectly acquainted with your philosophy, and contests every point. Your brother supported Descartes, and so did Damaie, and Corbinelli's letters; but these three united were not too much for Montmorin. He said that we can have no ideas, but what are produced by our senses—for example, *we think that we think*—this

is the sum total of their disputes—they supported their arguments with much wit. If you could have taken part in the dispute by letters, you would have strengthened your good brother; by the by he is still very unwell—he is suffering like you from the effects of medicines, which were unnecessary and violent, and have acted upon his blood, and given him boils, very painful for those who see, and those who feel them. Your brother is fortunate on this account in being allowed time to rest and recover his health. I was remarking yesterday how easily we comfort ourselves for the loss of cards, when we have something so much better, and with how much patience also we allow ourselves to be worn out with noise and company, as I wrote to you from Rennes. I confess that my time and experience makes me wish and even makes it a necessity that I should not be always in dissipation, but have some time to calm and compose my thoughts, and this I do every day in my woods.

Wednesday, September 18:

I HAVE been to visit the Princess, and told her your advice concerning Paris—she is much disposed to take it and go there. At present she is involved in a dreadful mourning; the Elector Pala-

tine * is dead. A stupid German announced his death to the Duchess of Orleans without any preparation. She screamed and cried, and some say fainted; but that I do not believe. She seems incapable of such a weakness—death alone can destroy animation in her. Have you heard that Langlade has been in such a state of insensibility that he was stretched upon straw, and his wife carried out of the room. A physician past by chance, (the scene was in Poitou) he asked to see Langlade, examined the poor body, and found it still warm—he attempted some remedies which every body laughed at. He at length tried an emetic with such success that they have written to Madame de La Fayette, that they have great hopes of his recovery. This story is very much like one you well know. Langlade would be a loss to Madame de La Fayette, who still finds comfort in the remains of her friends.

I know not which of the courtiers made the first slip of the tongue in calling Madame de Maintenon Madame de Maintenant †. This play upon words is not unworthy of your Castle. This lady passes every evening, the hours from eight to ten, with his Majesty. M. de Chumarante conducts her to the King's apartment openly, and attends her back to her own, in the face of the whole Court. I ad-

* Father to the Duchess of Orleans.

† Of the present day.

mire your friendship which makes you so attentive to Mademoiselle's* ills, and unwilling to allow those who were born in 1627, to take the liberty of being sick. You have been more uneasy for that poor Princess than all her noble relations, and such is *her* hard fate, that it is *I* who must thank you for your solicitude about her. Father Damaie, and I, repeat our old lessons. We are delighted to have his company, and think it droll to see at the Rocks the Prior of Livry. He came twenty leagues to visit us, and we insist upon his staying at least a week. He humbly salutes you. I give him your answer at present, as by the time it really arrives, he will have been at home at least a fortnight. This gives a dreadful idea of our distance from each other, and hope, such as we possess at present, is necessary to animate the heart while it makes us mistresses of the time of our meeting.

* The Princess, so often mentioned in the first letters, when going to marry M. de Lauzun.

LETTER CCLX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 22, 1680.

YOU are, my dear child, so much of a philosopher, that it is impossible to rejoice with you. You make a sort of anticipation of our hopes, and pass over the possession of our wishes to see nothing but our separation. We ought to make a very different use of the blessings that Providence prepares for us. After having thus reproached you, I will frankly confess that I deserve as much for myself, as it is impossible to be more distressed by the rapidity of time than I am, nor feel more acutely beforehand the sorrows that generally follow our pleasures. In a word, it is life, made up of blessings and calamities—when we possess what we wish, we still fear its loss, and when distant from happiness, still hope to recover it again. All we have to do is to try to be satisfied with God's will. I am resolved to enjoy, without alloy, the hope of seeing you soon. I should like to read Terence; there must be pleasure in becoming acquainted with the originals, when the copies have given so much entertainment. Your brother will translate the Satyr against absurd attachments—he ought to com-

pose one himself, or at least profit by it; if the state he is in does not correct him, I know not what can.

I must now talk a little of your health—are you not alarmed at the uncommon coldness of your legs? Is it possible that in a country famed for hot baths, you should allow them to perish with cold? Are there no herbs with which you could foment them? Is such a complaint thought of little consequence? It seems astonishing to me that you bear willingly such disagreeable and dangerous ills. I hear the Chevalier's health is much improved. I fancy his journey will no longer be put off. Let me talk to you of yours—try not to fix it for the worst time of the year, and make a good provision of strength to enable you to travel so many miles. I have remarked that journeys in general do not hurt you. The Princess of Tarente declares that she is never so well as when she makes the tour of the globe.

I shall now ask you a few questions. Is Mademoiselle de Grignan anxious to be at Paris? Has she determined what Convent she will reside in? Is her zeal moderate, or in the extreme? Do you bring your son with you? Answer this at your leisure. We have still beautiful weather—we read a great deal, and I feel the advantage of having no memory, as the plays of Corneille, the works of Boileau, those of Sarasin and Voiture, all pass before me without ever tiring. Sometimes we read Plutarch's Morality, which is admirable—we should

not object to a little of the Alcoran, if required, so much we enjoy every sort of reading. The short time we have still to pass here will soon be over. Mademoiselle de Scudery has just sent me two volumes of conversations—it is impossible that they should not have great merit when separated from her long romance. *

LETTER CCLXI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, October 3, 1680.

I FELT extremely the pain and derangement which the Chevalier's illness must have occasioned to you. I heard sooner than you did that his fever had diminished, and that the Englishman was curing him as he has done all those who have applied to him—this has been a fortunate year for his reputation. Madame de La Fayette writes to me that every body at Paris is seized with the fever. It is like a besieged town into which showers of shot are poured from the trenches; the only difference is that the wounds are not mortal.

You have heard that Madame de Ludre, tired of

* Clélia.

F 2.

pouting, unheeded and forgotten, has obtained of her pride to allow her to accept of a pension of two thousand crowns, and twenty five thousand francs, to pay her poor creditors, who not having been affronted, vulgarly desired to be paid without further ceremony—it is said she is as handsome as ever.

It is but natural that I should tell you what has just happened. You are acquainted with my horses, and know how handsome they are. The one which we call Favourite, was at work, they wanted to cut some of his hair from his ear—he put himself into a rage, and upon regaining his liberty threw himself over a gate, and died upon the spot. When I saw him dead, I exclaimed like Monsieur de M—— Alas this is what we must all come to. I assure you I bear my loss like a heroine—it shall not affect my journey to Paris in the least degree.

I really admire your patience in having been two hours in the company of a Jesuit, without disputing with him; but patiently listening to his stupid and false maxims, I could not have been so quiet with the good Father. I met one of them at Vichi—we quarrelled so much upon his first visit, that I disturbed the effects of his waters, and he was obliged to go to St. Miou to cool himself. Since you read St. Paul's Epistles, you are at the fountain head, and I have nothing more to say.

The Prince of Condé is extremely ill—France is likely to lose that hero. Your brother sends you a

thousand kind things. He is delighted with the prospect of seeing you this winter, and he ventures to hope that this visit to Paris will be more fortunate than the others, in which you had always some agitations.

Monsieur d'Hautefort is dead, which makes another vacant ribband—he never could be persuaded to take the Englishman's remedy. He said it was too expensive, although assured that it would cost but forty pistoles, when expiring, he exclaimed *it is too much*. The Dauphin has been cured by Philip's remedy—what will become of the faculty? Adieu my dear child, take care of your health, recover your strength, sleep, and eat well. How provoking that your husband was obliged to go again to Toulon. So much trouble and expence puts me quite out of all patience.

LETTER CCLXII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, October 20, 1680.

WHEN you receive this letter you may say *my mother is at Paris*. We set off to-morrow morning; your brother accompanies me in the hope of finding some relief for his complaints in

that great city. One may say of Paris 'that if it produces the ills, it also produces the remedy ;' every where else ignorance resides. Our good, honest, and sincere physician, declares that your brother's complaint baffles all his knowledge, and entreats us to seek more skilful hands. ~ We are accordingly going to depart; he looking forward to his arrival at Paris, as to the beginning of his hopes; but I am writing when I ought to be doing a thousand things. I have bid adieu to the good and obliging Princess. All my friends have wished me gone some time, but the hour of persuading your brother to move was not come. The roads are excellent; I hope Heaven will conduct us safe. I am sure we are doing right. I admire how chance has managed to make that which you wished become an absolute necessity—namely that I should be at Paris to receive you, I did not expect this would happen.

Malicorne, October 23.

WE are now upon the road full of impatience and desire to be at Paris. No time ought to be lost, if we can give your poor brother ease. His continual head aches joined to his other ills, and a beard as long as Lausun's*, alters him so much

* Monsieur de Lausun allowed his beard to grow in the prison of Fignerol, where he was confined ten years.

that he is not to be known. I beg however that you would not be uneasy about him. He wants nothing but proper advice; he must go through a cleansing equal to the waters of Jordan. In the meantime his situation is truly pitiable. You say you never talk of Providence but when you have a pain in your breast, and I actually hurt mine when once I begin the subject. I know of none on which there is so much to say, so much to observe and examine, and why not discourse upon it as upon physical subjects. Why not say as you did last year that our fears, our decisions, our will, our desires, are all ordained by the Almighty to execute his decrees. Is not that an interesting and inexhaustible subject to dwell upon? I can assure you that there is no experiment in Natural Philosophy more amusing than the examination and variety of our sentiments. Thus you see it is God's will that can be paraphrased a hundred ways. I heard of the Duke de Vendome, and his Intendant's departure, and said exactly what you did upon the subject. Adieu my dear child, I must go to bed—we have not enjoyed walking here—we set out to-morrow, and have not had time to rest ourselves.

LETTER CCLXIII.

To the same.

Paris, October 30, 1680.

WE arrived here last night by the finest weather in the world. If you are wise you will take advantage of it and not put off till the next moon for fear of rain and bad roads. We have managed your brother so well that he has now neither fever or pain. It remains (as he has some strength) to perfect his recovery, and not to raise him from the dead.

The Chevalier and I have inspected your apartment, and find it so complete that you must be pleased with it. I have seen all our good friends. Madame de La Fayette spent the afternoon here. She finds benefit from asses' milk. It does not appear that Madame de Schomberg has yet superseded me with her—there are many things necessary to make a new friendship. You may remember my remarks upon the pleasure people take in setting themselves off to their new acquaintance—then it is, that all is admirable and admired—every talent displayed, and praise lavishly bestowed on both sides. There is more self love in those attachments than real confidence and affection—in a word, I

believe I am not likely yet to be cast off. Mademoiselle Amelot was married on Sunday, (unknown to any body) to a Monsieur Vaubecour. Quite a new man—a man of quality, not rich, whose mother lives at Chalons. Any thing was better than moping us all the winter with her languishing passions.

Mademoiselle de Meri has at last fixed upon a house. She may settle herself at leisure—nothing hurries her—she sees I am glad of her company while she can remain here. She is in better health than usual. She can converse and listen. We have long conversations together. Oh my dear child, how easy it is to live with me; how far does a little good humour and willingness to be sociable go with me. I am satisfied often with only the appearance of confidence. Few people have an easier temper than mine. I wish you could see how comfortable Mademoiselle de Meri and I are when she pleases; but when a repulse is met with at every word, (although every precaution is taken not to offend) when the most public events are treated as great secrets, and what is known by the whole world, called scandal and ill natured constructions—when doubt, anger, and even aversion, are evident, I own that an affectionate heart is wounded, and indignation is excited, I am not accustomed to such rough treatment, and ought to be spared it. Yet my daughter, all this I have borne, nor would I mention it to you, if the greatest alteration had not

taken place. I feel the change most sensibly, and if it should happily continue, it will give me infinite pleasure. You may believe me when I say so, since I do not often make such declarations. What passes between Mademoiselle de Meri and me at present, is not a reconciliation, but changes produced by a softness in her manners. Our conversations are agreeable, and have a degree of confidence—in short, I am satisfied, and surely am not difficult to please, since I can take up with civility instead of friendship. Adieu my dearest, come to us with cheerfulness—banish ideal misfortunes, and believe that if indulged, your health will not be able to resist them. In a word, I recommend to your care the person I love most in the world—be attentive to her preservation under that title. The Chevalier is at Versailles. The Dauphin and Dauphiness have still the ague. All your friends have been very attentive to me. I think Mademoiselle de Grignan's zeal is so great that she will be obliged to communicate some of it to others, and will now talk of it to the Abbé de la Vergne with pleasure.

LETTER CCLXIV.

To the same.

Paris, November 8, 1680.

I MAKE a different use of my guests than you imagine, and regret that I did not make you easy on that head before I left the Rocks. I am always delighted when the Chevalier returns from Versailles. He cannot quit the Dauphin at present, who is seriously ill. The Englishman has promised the King (and made his life the forfeit) to cure his Royal Highness both of his fever and diarrhea in four days. If he should fail, he may chance to be thrown out of the window, but if his predictions are verified, as they have been in regard to most of the sick he has attended, I shall say that an altar ought to be raised to him, as to a second Esculapius. It is a pity Moliere is dead, he would have made an excellent scene of Daquin's rage, at not possessing the infallible remedy; as also that of the other physicians, who are worried to death with the experiments, successes, and predictions, (which are really wonderful) of this little man. The King made him mix up the medicine in his presence, and trusts the Dauphin entirely to his care. The Dauphiness is already better. Nothing but this affair is talked of

at Court. The Chevalier told me fifty amusing anecdotes, which cannot be committed to paper. We shall see if your brother's returning health will make any change in his intentions. I doubt it much—at least in regard to his place, he has long hated it. All the events of this life are the sport of Providence—I let it decide, and frequently meditate upon our dependant state, and upon the varieties of our opinions. But our affections are more deeply rooted, at least I judge so by mine, for the love I bear you is mixed with my blood, and is become a part of myself.

The correspondence between the mother and daughter was here interrupted by Madame de Grignan's residing at Paris till the 13th of September, 1684, when Madame de Sévigné was obliged to go to Brittany to settle some affairs of importance, and left her daughter at Paris.

LETTER CCLXV.

To Madame de Grignan.

Etampes, September 13, 1684.

YOU may believe, my dearest child, that in spite of your excellent advice, I found myself on quitting you, like a person surrounded by swords which wound, turn which way you will. I scarcely dared to think or pronounce a word, every thing excited such painful sensations, that my feelings were almost insupportable. I have observed a regimen as you desired. I do the best I can, have eat and slept, and taken care of the good Abbè. The reasons for taking this journey I have caused to be repeated to me very often—they are so strong that I find it is right to attend to them; but still I shall require a frequent repetition to enable me to bear our separation with a proper degree of tranquillity.

It gives me infinite pleasure to know you are at Versailles, where the variety of objects will keep up your spirits more than the scenes of Chartres and Etampes can do mine. I recommend to you the care of your health; having left you with such round cheeks is a great comfort to me—preserve them for my sake.

Amboise, September 16.

I HAVE received no letter from you, yet have no other wish. I sent you the good Abbé de Pile's excuses—he was the only person that suited us at Orleans, for as to Madame du Pont, who has a great deal of merit and wit, the good Abbé was so extremely afraid of her, that I should have killed him had I invited her; I therefore went to visit her in the morning. She converses delightfully—I made her understand why I did not ask her to embark with us. She took the hint as I could wish, and finding how very glib her tongue was, I felt that even I should have been fatigued if I had passed thirteen hours in her company sitting in my coach, which is become a boat. I preferred being moped to being under any restraint. To-morrow we shall hear mass, and go six leagues beyond Tours, for I am resolved to avoid all the feasting and kindnesses of Dangeau. In the company of a dear good old uncle one cannot move so easily.

Are you not going to Livry? I hope you are, think of me there, but with that fortitude and philosophy which makes you govern your thoughts so wisely. As for me I cannot make use of such a regimen. I feel that I am losing a precious time in my life. I was deceived in some points, and I own that the situation of my affairs alarmed me. Ah my dear child, how much I require your company

to revive and support my courage. Admiring the extreme beauty of this river is my whole occupation. I have read the life of M. de Montmorency, which is tollerably entertaining. Adieu, my dearest, I wish to make my letters short, but cannot succeed; you have much to say to me of yourself—I shall certainly find letters from you at Angers.

LETTER CCLXVI.

To the same.

Angers, September 20, 1684.

I ARRIVED yesterday at five o'clock at the Pont de Cé, and having seen my niece de Bussi, and heard mass at Saumur, I found a coach and six at the bridge, which I took to be my son's, and so it was; but instead of seeing him in it, I found the Abbé Charier, who came to meet me, as your brother was indisposed at the Rocks. He brought me the letter you wrote to me from Versailles, and I confess I did not allow myself to be restrained by his presence. My heart was so much oppressed, that I must have died had I not given free vent to my tears. I have just opened the letter you send to your brother; how tenderly you express yourself concerning me, how much anxiety for my pre-

ervation. I allow you to make a merit to him of my taking this journey, but God knows it was the impossibility of living elsewhere, and the fear of a shameful derangement in my finances, that are my true reasons. There are times in our life when all resources failing, honour and conscience command us not to go too far. This is the real truth, and what has had power to make the good Abbé undertake so long and fatiguing a journey. I alighted from my carriage yestaday, at the Bishop of Angers, and saw the Abbé Arnaud, who is as warm a friend as ever, and much pleased with your polite note. Adieu, I am going to dine with the holy Prelates.

Thursday.

I AM on the point of setting out for the Rocks, my dearest. I dined, as you know, with the Bishop; his wonderful piety and activity in performing his parochial duties, is incredible; he is eighty seven years of age, and is only supported through all his fatigues by his love of God and of his neighbour. I had an hour's private conversation with him, and discovered in him all his brother's wit and vivacity. I trust that I shall find letters from you at the Rocks.

LETTER CCLXVII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 27, 1684.

AT length, my dearest, I possess three of your letters; what treasures they appear to me when I have no other consolation. They are my life, they agitate, occupy, and keep me alive. I must talk to you of Versailles—I augur well of the silence, and cannot believe that you will be refused so just a demand in these times of liberality. You see that all your friends advised you to make this trial. How happy you will be if by your care and solicitations you obtain this trifling favour—it could not come more apropos, for I believe (and that conviction adds much to my grief) that your affairs are very much deranged. As for myself I am convinced that I should never have recovered the inconveniency into which a delay of six months more would have thrown me. We lead rather a dull life here, yet I do not think that more company would give me pleasure. Your brother has been plagued with boils. My daughter-in-law * has but a few chearful

* Jeane de Brchaut, married to the Baron de Sevigne in February 1684.

moments as she is devoured with vapours. She changes colour twenty times a day, without ever having a good one. She is extremely delicate—she walks very little—is always cold—at nine o'clock she is worn out; the days are too long for her, and as rest and quiet are absolutely necessary for her health, she leaves me at perfect liberty that she may enjoy the same. It is impossible for me to feel that there is any other mistress than myself in the house. I have not the least trouble but am waited upon with every attention, and by invisible orders. I take my walk alone, but I dare not trust myself in the twilight, lest I should break out into tears and lamentations—darkness would ill suit the present state of my mind. Why did you, my dear child, visit my deserted chamber? Why wound yourself needlessly? Was it there that you missed me most? You pleased me much by mentioning what is passing at Versailles. Madame de Maintenon's place is like no other in the world. There never has been or will be such another. I trust you did not omit making some speeches which might reach her through the channel of our friends. I do not chuse to have any assistance in the chairs I am working for M. de Coulanges. Leave it to me, I feel I am coining money while I remain here.

How extraordinary is the death of Madame de Cœuvres, and still more so that of the Chevalier d'Humieres. Alas how death stalks amongst us and

seizes upon our friends. I am perfectly well and am unwilling to disturb so happy a state by physick.

We are waiting for the Capuchin Friar. The poor little woman here excites compassion—they are not a lively couple, both being unwell. They send a thousand kind remembrances to you. She does not with awkward eagerness ask me for my friendship—she has no troublesome attentions—nothing that can teaze or put me out of temper. In short, her manners are exactly what I could wish them to be. The good Abbé amuses himself all day with calculations, and continues well.

Sunday, October 1.

IT is now ten o'clock at night, and all the family are already retired to rest. This is the quiet hour in which I am more particularly yours, than when in the circle that fills my chamber. I have now past a week—alas I am not much advanced in my pilgrimage. It is surprising that I have written so much without having said a word of Mademoiselle de Grignan's. I am more grieved than surprised at her having thus left you all.* She had long been

* Mademoiselle de Grignan disgusted with the world retired to the Convent of Bernardine Nuns at Gif, without apprizing her family of her intentions, she had wished to try a monastic life some years.

tired of our worldly conversations, and had long wished to be freed from them and us. Your brother is gone to Rennes—he wants to be certain that his boils are not of consequence—his wife is not offended at my wishing to pass this day alone. I have walked all the morning in the wood with the Abbè Charier—she is now going to stroll there while I am retired to my chamber. I assure you that nothing can be more convenient. Your sister-in-law appears to me to have a great many good qualities, but in these early days of our acquaintance, I am only disposed to praise by negatives; she is *not* this, she is *not that*—in time, probably, I shall say she *is* so and so. She wishes to obtain your friendship, but without an absurd and ill bred eagerness. In a word, she is not *eager* about any thing. I must keep to that style for the present. She does *not* speak the provincial dialect—she has *not* the accent of Rennes.

We have here the most beautiful weather; how I pity you for not being at Livry, since I have given you my passion for the country. You know, however, that it never lasted with me longer than when I had the pleasure of your company. The Disposer of all events has fixed my destiny, and in a very few days I shall have more of the country than I wish for at present. I place to my account all your attentions to Corbinelli; he is not bad company, neither is Madame de La Fayette. Be fre-

quently with those two persons, and you will allow that I may easily be spoilt for other society after having enjoyed theirs. Adieu my dear child, I send a kiss to the rhetorician,* but defy him, with all his rhetoric, to persuade me that I do not love him tenderly.

LETTER CCLXVIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, October 4, 1684.

I IMAGINED that you would soon go to Gif—nothing could be more natural than such a visit. I trust you will tell me every particular of Mademoiselle de Grignan's retreat. All that passes at the Hotel de Carnavalet is interesting to me according to the degree in which the events affect you. My melancholy is not at all dissipated by variety of objects here. I live upon my reflections and upon what our own quiet family affords. My son may thank me for banishing from his house many disagreeable visitors who worried him before I came. I am delighted with their absence, not being as you

* The young Marquis de Grignan.

know very tractable with tiresome people, and not possessing your happy talent of falling into a reverie. Upon those occasions I often lose all patience, and say very rude things. Thank God we are left alone and I enjoy my book. If you wish for a slight mourning I can furnish you with one. Monsieur de Montmoron died four days ago of an apoplexy—his is a pious soul gone to Heaven; however we must not pretend to judge. I have seen the Princess who comprehends my affliction at leaving you, and loves us both. She drinks every day twelve or fourteen cups of tea—she lets it infuse as we do, and fills her cup half with boiling water. This she declares cures her of all ills. She assures me that the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel drinks forty cups of tea every morning—‘but perhaps my dear Madam,’ said I, ‘it is thirty.’ ‘No, it *is* forty—he was dying, and it restored him to life. In a word, that quantity *must* be swallowed.’ I now know every thing that passes in Germany. The Princess with all her oddities is both good and amiable.

Here is a letter from M. de Pomponne. I sincerely rejoice at his having got so good an Abbaye, and given him in so agreeable a manner. Does this mean, my dear child, that you alone are never to obtain any thing? Make your advantage of that fortitude which supports you upon all trying occasions. Were it only for my sake preserve your health. I have not strength enough to bear your

absence and the idea of your suffering together. Your brother is just returned from Rennes—in his absence I have conversed a great deal with his wife. I find her full of good sense—she enters into all our past affairs like a rational creature, and better than any body in Brittany. It is an important advantage not to be full of prejudices, but to see things in the proper light. I cannot obey when you desire me to be always in public. I must spend some of my hours with *you*, and that liberty, dull as it is, has charms for me. The month of September seems to have lasted an age, and I can scarcely believe that I have only been a fortnight here.

LETTER CCLXIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, November 5, 1684.

YES, my dear child, I promise not to be alarmed at your ills, but I entreat you always to describe them as they really are. You are now it seems obliged to cure yourself of the effects of the remedies you have taken. The third bleeding was more terrible than the second, which was sufficiently bad. Your medicines too were badly made up, for the Friars are inimical to Polychrest—you have been

ill managed every way. I understood it was Alliot who was your physician. You have tried to make your illness pass for a sore throat, in which there was no danger; be it as may, my dear child, cure yourself with the herb which has before done you so much good. Cool your inflamed lungs, and make Monsieur du Plessis* write; only put a line at the top and bottom of the letters, for I must see your hand-writing. As for our healths, I shall tell you the exact truth, mine is perfect. I walk a great deal when the weather is fine, and avoid fogs and dews. Your brother dreads them for me, and obliges me to come in—his wife does not go out at all—she is taking the Capuchin Friar's medicine; that is to say, cooling drinks, and baths of an infusion of sweet herbs. These remedies have fatigued her exceedingly, and been of no sort of use.

What impression do you think the death of Madame de Luines made upon me? It has inspired me with a melancholy I cannot conquer. What alas can save us from death, since youth, health, happiness, and tranquillity, are of no avail. Last year she had paid the tribute to humanity by suffering a very violent illness—how soon after is she carried to her grave—this is a subject for meditation. M. de Chaulnes is much afflicted—his lady has been

* He was the young Marquis of Grignan's Governor.

very ill—they have both so much friendship for me that you must not neglect them.

You ask me in your last letter why I am not with you; easy would it be for me to give you the reasons of our separation. I could tell you of the misery that reigns in this part of the country, of the sums that are owing to me, and of the difficulty of obtaining payment, also of the debts which I have contracted in other places, and how likely I was to be overwhelmed with cares, if I had not at last taken this resolution. You know that I put it off two years and thought it no sacrifice, while with you, my dear child—but there are times when destruction would be the consequence of further delay. At present I feel my income is no longer mine, and I must try to finish with the same strict honour and probity which I have professed all my life. It is this that has made me tear myself from your arms. Your brother is happy in having an opportunity of returning me the sums he owes me. My income sleeps while I am here, and I can bear the loss my tenants make me sustain.

The weather is now detestable—the post boys are half drowned, and we are no more to expect our letters regularly. There was little to say of our visit to Fouesnel—it is a dull journey without any variety.

Let me turn to Monsieur de La Trousse who seems to be advancing fast in the career of fortune

Are you acquainted with the properties of a machine called a lever? I have been *that* to him. May I not say so without vanity? Madame de Marbœuf is just arrived, she is a very good woman, but my dear child, be assured I could do very well without her. I prefer liberty to her company. I shall do with her what I please, for I must have hours to myself. She sends you a thousand compliments—adieu.

LETTER CCLXX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, November 26, 1684.

SO much the worse for you, my dear child, if you do not read your letters—it is a pleasure which your indolence makes you lose, and indeed that is not the least mischief it does you—as for me I read them over and over. Is it possible that in speaking to the King you were confused, seeing, as you say, nothing but the majesty that surrounded him, and thus lost all your recollection? Can I believe that my daughter so clever and endowed with so much presence of mind could find herself in such a situation? The business however is, to obtain what you ask for. I understand the King's

answer to mean this—that he will do something more than the trifling gratification that you demanded, and grant the survivorship which he knows will be a capital thing for your family. You must, my dear, set me right, and I desire you to do so, for I hate to make a false judgment of things. Madame de La Fayette writes to me that you appeared at Versailles as handsome as an angel; that you spoke to the King, and it was supposed had asked a pension for your husband. I shall answer in a negligent manner that I believe it was to desire his Majesty to consider the great expences M. de Grignan was obliged to be at on the coast of Provence.

I have told your brother the history of the Chevalier de Soisson's duel. We did not imagine that the eyes of a grandmother could do such execution. I have not thought of mentioning the raising of the seige of Buda, it is so trifling an event in the annals of Europe, and of Christianity, that it scarcely deserves notice; but I fancy the Dauphiness will take the trouble of being vexed, as her brother has distinguished himself so much at that seige, and run so many hazards that it is rather hard to be obliged to return after so much fatigue.

Our good Abbé is indisposed with one of his bad colds—he is in his nice alcove—and we can nurse him here better than at Paris. As for your sister-in-law she has taken all the Friar's violent medicines without their having the least effect upon her con-

stitution. When the weather is fine, which it has been these three days, I go out at two o'clock, and walk a long time without stopping. I pass and re-pass before my workmen who are cutting wood and remind me of those pictures of winter so much admired. I do not however loiter to contemplate the scene. I enjoy the warmth of the sun and then return to my chamber, and leave the twilight and the dews for those who have more vulgar constitutions. I am grown a very fine lady to please you. I follow all your prescriptions. Your brother hears reason when I retire to write to you. Indeed we should be very dull without him, and he without us. We have read many *in folios* in twelve days. In short, those who are happy enough to love reading can never be at a loss for amusement.

Nothing can be more friendly than the letters I receive from Monsieur and Madame de Coulanges; they write charmingly, although their style differs much. I dined yesterday with the Princess, and left our good Marbœuf there. Shall I tell you how your mother was dressed? A good warm nightgown made of the silk you refused—a purple and silver petticoat, and an undress cap of point lace. I assure you that I looked very well. I found the Princess much in the same dress, which made me easy as to etiquette. Give me some account of what you now wear, that my imagination may have something to rest upon. What is become of Corbinelli? I have

not seen a line from him this fortnight. I am uneasy at the Dauphin's illness. The Chevalier tells me his own health is improved. Adieu my dearest and most amiable child, I cannot conceive any attachment stronger than that which I feel for you—it is an unknown country.

LETTER CCLXXI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, December 13, 1684.

IN vain they tell me that it was yesterday but three months since I parted with you and shed so many tears. No, my dear child, I cannot believe it. I frankly confess that I no longer know the measure of time since the day of our separation—all is confusion in my head, and I know not where I am. A gift from the King of twelve thousand francs, would certainly have made me spend the winter at Paris very agreeably near you; but as a petition for that purpose might have met with some difficulty, it was necessary to find the sum in my own economy, and this I have done.

Your description of the great beauty which is soon to make its appearance at Versailles, is replete with humour. You say that she is blooming and

pure, likely to supersede all other beauties. I was impatient to hear her name—when behold it proves to be a river,* which has allowed itself in spite of its prudery to be drawn out of its road by an army of forty thousand men—less than that number could not make the Beauty a bed. Madame de Maintenon gives the King what he most wished for. I scarcely knew the name of that river, but although it had little celebrity, those who lived near its banks will feel its absence. The loss of a river is a misfortune very seldom expected, and our geographers will be as much embarrassed as those who could not find Mount Ossa, and Mount Pelion, when Mercury removed them from their places †—and it was that consideration which occasioned his putting them back again. I doubt much our King's having so much complaisance.

You tell me continually of deaths that surprise one—that great Semiane was very subject to the gravel—now, poor man, he is completely cured—how quick all this has happened. You fatigue your-

* An attempt was made to turn the waters of the Eure from their natural course, and carry them by an aqueduct to Maintenon, and from thence to Versailles; but the war in 1688, and the dreadful maladies which the work occasioned to the troops that were employed, was the cause of the project being given up.

† See the Contemplator, one of Lucian's Dialogues.

self in answering to every article of my letters, for Heaven's sake let me say what I please; I have nothing else to do. I see from hence the dress you wore at Versailles, but let me have an idea of my daughter as she is at Paris. We have had fine weather these last two days; we enjoy it but know that it will not continue. I defy the rheumatism to catch me. I like soft weather, but when it ends in rain and heavy dark clouds I am ready to weep. Adieu.

Friday, December 15.

HERE is little Beaulieu who is going to play the man of importance this winter at Versailles—he is happy, since in six days he will see you—that thought awakens my sorrows. I send you the most precious thing I possess, which is half a bottle of the quieting balsam. I never can have it filled again as the Friars have no more. With this balsam they have cured the little woman of Nephritic cholics—they desire you to rub your side with it—that is to say, put ten or twelve drops into spirits of hartshorn, it must be warmed and rubbed into the skin. They pretend it as a divine remedy, and a certain cure for sore throats. I heartily wish you may not want it, but not being happy enough to indulge that hope, I entreat you to try it. I advise you to think no more of New Year's gifts—it does very well when

we are together and can laugh. I could now weep in thinking that we are not so.

LETTER CCLXXII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, December 27, 1684.

WITHOUT knowing your definitions, or your proofs of friendship, I am persuaded that they are all the natural inhabitants of my breast, therefore I have not hesitated to give the precious balsam to the best part of a whole, of which I am only a trifling part. If I could any way foresee that it might be useful to myself there would be more merit in the gift, but I confess that I have no Nephritic complaints, nor indeed ever had any worthy of so noble a remedy—keep it then carefully.

I can imagine your surprise at seeing Beaulieu so unexpectedly—it was natural—he told you how wise I am grown. I no longer commit those follies which were formerly my delight—insensibly a time comes when we take more care of ourselves. We enjoy a brilliant sun at present, and we walk as in the fine days of Autumn. I thought of you on Christmas eve, and fancied you at your Convent of Blue Nuns, while we in the greatest silence and

tranquillity were praying in our Chapel. Your brother seems to have a taste for devotion—he has much knowledge, and reads continually religious books, which makes a great impression upon his mind. The day will come when it will be a blessing to have occupied ourselves with the truths of Christianity—how dreadful must death be when we are not prepared to meet it by pious meditations. My daughter-in-law joins with her husband in these sentiments. I am the most wicked of the three, but not enough to be quite turned off.

You really want a hundred thousand francs as much as the Count de Fiesque*, but still that would not be sufficient. I shall pity him more when he is in possession of that sum than when he walked on foot, and was not ashamed of an honourable poverty. I entreat you to grant me one request, and that is not to accompany M. de Grignan to Gif. It is a fatiguing and dangerous journey at this season—remember it cost you three bleedings, and a sore throat, the last time you went there. I hope your husband will be on my side, and consider your health—it is the first favour I have asked him since his return—I embrace him most cordially.

* The King insisted upon the Genoese paying that sum to Lewis Count de Fiesque, who had a claim upon the Republic.

Your brother will tell you the situation I am in ;* fortunately I had by me some of the powder of Sympathy. A little wound which we thought quite cured has opened again, but it was only to give this remedy the credit of restoring it to health—you may depend upon a perfect recovery. He assures me I have managed myself extremely well—when I walked it was to be better, as without either inflammation or swelling it is not necessary to keep a leg upon a sofa. The quieting balsam had no effect, which made me so anxious to apply your powder of Sympathy. With the help of this treasure which Providence sent me by your hand, I shall walk as much as I please, and no longer deserve that you should have any anxiety on my account.

I went on Thursday to see the Princess ; she has brought back Madame de Marbœuf with a fever and inflammation upon her lungs. The poor woman has written three lines to me in a shaking hand. I hear she persists in not having any physician, in not being bled, and in not drinking anything but Ptyisan. We shall see how that method will succeed, and according to the event shall praise or blame her conduct. I am convinced she will recover. Your sister-in-law is far from being in danger from loss of

* Madame de Sevigne had at that time a wound in her leg.

blood; she wants to find a medicine which will give her a proof that she has any in her veins. She appears to me as at first, a very amiable woman, who takes great pleasure in hearing me talk of you, and is charmed with the warmth of your attachment to me.

LETTER CCLXXIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, February 4, 1685.

MY cure has not been quite so rapid as we expected, but still it is you who have cured me. We thought at first that four days would do the business, but it has required a fortnight—that is all the mistake we made. I have been to see the Princess, have walked with moderation—cease to look upon me as a woman fit only for an hospital. I do not look sick but am in full beauty—and let the Chevalier say what he will, I certainly have gained strength of mind and fortitude. This is the real state of my body and mind.

You are then to have the pleasure of seeing the Doge*—it is the same as if the whole Republic

* The Doge of Genoa was expected at Paris, accompanied by four senators, to pay homage to Louis XIV.---this only took place upon the 14th of May.

came in person—but who can resist the King's commands?

Wednesday, 7.

YOU could not do better than to try to divert your melancholy by a tour to Versailles; but it would have been more desirable not to have had any melancholy to divert. I fancy the Sympathetic powder is not made for old wounds; it has only cured the smallest and least troublesome of mine. I at present put a black ointment to my leg, which is excellent. I have not the least fever, and am exactly like other people. I write, read, and work, and wait for your letters with impatience. This is my real state. I am now in my chamber, the sun shines around me, and I shall perhaps take a turn in my mall. Set your imagination right, my dear child, and draw the curtain which prevents your seeing me. There is no weeping mother, no pious Eneas at her feet—it is all a dream I assure you; but let us preserve our legs as long as we can—they are difficult to appease when once angry.

My son and his wife are at Rennes where they have some business to transact. I think the poor woman so ill, so tormented with vapours, and slow fever, cold chills, and violent head-achs, that I have advised her to put herself near the Capuchin Friar's. It is they that have done her so much mischief by

their strong medicines. My son is taking the Essence of Jacob two or three times a day—it is better being in town with so many ills, than in the country. I am here quite alone, and by way of having a human face to look at, I have sent for that pretty woman M. de Grignan was in love with one whole evening. She reads while I work; she accompanies me in my walks, and as Heaven always mixes good with evil, it has given me in my solitude hopes of a perfect recovery. I am ordered to walk to give strength to the limb. Adieu my dearest, you know with what tenderness I embrace you.

LETTER CCLXXIV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, February 25, 1685.

WHAT an event is the death of the King of England*! and how unfortunate that the news should arrive upon the eve of the great masquerade. My dear Marquis† is unlucky in meeting with such an unexpected bar to his pleasure—he

* The young Marquis of Grignan.

† Charles II. of England who died February 15, 1685.

must comfort himself in looking at his smart dress, and in the praises bestowed upon him, joined to the hope of the masquerade being only delayed. I can better than most people understand your feelings in regard to your son. Yes, it is true that we transmit ourselves to our children, and feel more keenly for them than for ourselves. I have often experienced those agitations, which however are agreeable when felt for a deserving child who interests every body. Your son pleases generally—he has something animated and agreeable in his countenance—he fixes the attention wherever he goes. My leg is cured, and I walk just like other people; pity me no more, it would kill me to be confined to the house. I write to my son that I do not want him, that I amuse myself, and desire him to do the same. He is enjoying with his wife the gaieties of Rennes, from whence they will not return till Shrove Tuesday. The Princess comes to enjoy my sunshine—she has given the good Abbé some divine Venice treacle, which has cured him of violent head aches, and a faintness, which alarmed me. She is the best physician in the world—her medicines are all good—the Friars used to admire her shop.

How singular that I have not yet expatiated upon the King of England's death—he was not old, and a crowned head, which proves that death spares no one; it will be a great happiness if he was a Catholic, and died in our religion. I fancy that England

will be the theatre of many interesting events. The Prince of Orange, the Duke of Monmouth, the immense number of Lutherans, and the horror with which they are inspired against the Catholics, must occasion a great tragedy. We shall see what Providence will determine in the end. The present events seem not to put a stop to the amusements of Versailles—since you are to return there on Monday, I beg of you to make the most of the reasons which call you to Court, since no one can make a better figure there. Every thing seems disposed to favour your plans—my wishes upon the occasion are not less sincere and warm than if I was near you.

My dear child, I must inform you of a mistake you have been led into. You fancy that your brother is a good judge of cooking, of sauces, and keeping an excellent table; not at all—he has no skill, nor Larmechin either. We must not therefore be surprised that a cook who was tolerably clever, is totally spoilt in their service, and I whose knowledge you so heartily despise, am the person whose eagle eye overlooks every thing. No decision is made till they have watched my looks. The pleasure of boasting of my reign over all these ignorant people has led me into this silly story.

LETTER CCLXXV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, February 28, 1685.

YOU are once more returned to Versailles, and the masquerade again in question. The death of Charles II. was not an event sufficiently melancholy to overcome the spirits of the young people anxious to enjoy the pleasures of the Carnival.

Your story of the poor Abbé who was racked upon the wheel is dreadful—he was a man of good family, so at least says Corbinelli, and might have been an ornament to his cloth. I am of your opinion that after having heard this poor wretch's story, one wants the assistance of a smelling bottle—confined eight days under ground with his head downwards—how shocking—but can one live eight days without eating? Some people are born under a strange star. What advantage did this man derive from having stolen the Bank Note? Alas of what things are we not capable when forsaken by our God! The good Abbé is quite recovered of his giddiness. At times he lost his sight, could not stand, and alarmed me exceedingly. I wrote a letter to you lately, which I have put by in my drawer; but I may hereafter send it you. It contains thoughts

that struck me, and of which you may make what use you please. I should make a very good one of Jossan's powder if the cécatrix upon my wound required any assistance, but I am quite cured, thanks to God and you.

I pity M. and Madame de Guitaut very much; an affair of that sort once disputed makes one tremble. Is there then nothing that may be depended upon? Your cause will succeed against Aiguebonne, for he is out of luck.

LETTER CCLXXVI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Ash Wednesday, March 7, 1685.

HERE I am, my dear child, as much advanced in Lent as you are, and my young Marquis. I dined on Monday with the Princess—a nice little dinner neat and delicately drest. She talked to me of the masquerade, and I read to her your history of the little Indians, which is inimitably told. Yesterday I gave a dinner to a poor friend of the gospel, a worthy man, and quite an Anchoret. I am the only person he has spoken to during three years that he has been in this part of the world; but we know many of the same people, and have the same

way of thinking. He is a saint, but alas I am not one—that is a misfortune—it gave me pleasure to pass a day at this holy season with such a companion.

Your brother is still at Rennes, and I rejoice that he remains there because it pleases him. Coulanges has written me a charming account of your dinner at the Duke de Chaulnes. His style is particularly adapted to embellish the most trifling circumstances. No one can deny him that talent.

My grandson I find has been admired by every body. This, my dear child, is an important winter for him. It seems necessary that he should act a part at fourteen, therefore he must be introduced in the world two years before.

Your remarks upon the Abbé Charier are very just; he has not his father's graces, but he has a sound judgment and an excellent heart, which I would not advise him to exchange for any character that Lyons or even Paris can produce.

It appears to me that the King of England's last hours have turned out more philosophical and English, than Christian and Catholic. To say with calmness adieu King, surprises me; those few words express many thoughts and uncommon fortitude. He was not old; he quitted many desirable things, and although his reign has always been agitated, and his life debauched, yet of religion said he not a word.

Adieu my dear Countess, a thousand loves to your husband, and to the awkward vinegar merchant, who rolled his barrow so ill; the account of the characters at the masquerade amused me much; but I hear nothing of the Duke de Bourbon who dances so well. I knew that old Choiseuil had broke *one* of his ribs, but really *two* is too much. My dear little Marquis, I must embrace you and rejoice with you at your good fortune. A well dressed Indian, who dances in time, and holds up his head, strikes me most agreeably.

LETTER CCLXXVII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, April 11, 1685.

YOU are too good, my dear child, when you send me even one line from Versailles. I admire you in the midst of that whirlwind, I laugh at the hurry and confusion you live in, running to hear a fine sermon before you have finished your dinner, affected by the discourse, but flying from thence to the play. This is delightful, but rest yourself for Heaven's sake—remember you have a pain in your side which requires management. I entreat you to attend to your preservation, as you

desire me to attend to mine. What do you mean by your dreams? Why do you take my poor person for the bugbear of a jaundiced imagination? You fancy me in the most dreadful state, which alarms you so much, that you inflict upon yourself sufferings that have not yet fallen to my share. How easy you would be could you now see me. Ask the Princess how I am? Pray thank her for the Venice treacle she sends you. She often asks to see the part of your letter where you mention her, and I should dislike being put to shame by having nothing to shew her.

I have just been writing to our friend Coulanges. I took it into my head to preach to him upon the state of his conscience which he clears of its sins, in part, once a year; I tell him that he is only afraid of too great an accumulation, and not of the quality of his sins. I am convinced that after he has passed a week at Baviile, his only fault, which is loving the pleasures of the table, will be as well established as ever. This is the case with every body—all the difference is, that his failing is less disgraceful than that of most people, therefore we take the liberty to scold and jest with him about it.

I entreat you to ask the Abbè Bigorre to remind the Cardinal de Bouillon of the charitable gift which is remitted to me every year from the King's list; it is but a trifle—but on that trifle depends a poor creature's existence.

April 15.

I AM now going to give you one more proof of my sincerity. You, my dear child, have a spirit of prophecy. I shall tremble when you dream frightful things of me. You said my recovery was not to be depended upon, and I believe you were right. Four days ago my leg chose to swell, and throw out pimples in a violent manner. We sent to the famous Friars, desiring them to visit me here. Your brother wishes to consult them for his wife. The Friars have sent us this answer, that they cannot leave their Convent, but if I will go to Rennes they will engage to make a perfect cure of my leg, but can do nothing without seeing it. In a word, they press this matter so strongly and Madame de Marboeuf offers me so comfortable an apartment, that I have agreed to go to-morrow to Rennes. You will be glad that I change the air, and shall be under the care of persons of science. I take only one woman and two footmen, and travel in my coach with six horses. I leave my dear good Abbè with my son and his wife. It is not without much regret that I quit this quiet spot and the young verdure which seemed to restore my youth.

To the Count de Grignan.

WE love you so tenderly my dear Count, that we cannot believe that Adonis was handsomer than you, at least he had not a better figure, which is the perfection of man. Go, go to Livry, I entreat you—after having acquitted yourself of your devotions in your agreeable and holy retirement, your wife will tell you where I am destined to pass these days of piety. I should have been too happy in spending them here—God would not have it so. Your brother-in-law devotes himself more and more to the study of religion, and expects not to be melancholy and unhappy in the next world. These thoughts occupy him at present; God grant that they may last. A time will come when every thing else will be useless. We all condole with you upon the death of the Chevalier de Buons—it was impossible to know and not to love him. I hear of nothing but the death of persons younger than myself. Such events make us draw painful inferences.

To Madame de Grignan.

I RETURN to you my daughter. Nothing can equal the beauty of the gallery at Versailles; it is a sample of royal magnificence which is beyond any in the world. I can form an idea of the whole by the part I have seen. Did you not once meet the eye of the Favourite* in that beautiful spot? What in a place of such extent, did you not make one step towards her, nor she one to meet you? I do not tell you how many wishes I form for your success, or for the prosperity of all the Grignans. I hear that the double marriages of the Duke de Bourbon, † and Monsieur du Maine will be celebrated in July. I will not write to Coulanges to day as he is at Baille.

My leg is so much better that if I could trust to appearances I would give up going to Rennes, but your brother and all my friends here insist upon my making the trial.

* Madame de Maintenon who had formerly been upon a very intimate footing with Madame de Grignan.

† Son of the Prince de Conde, was married to Mademoiselle de Nantes, daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, at the same time the Duke de Maine, son of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, was married to Mademoiselle de Bourbon, daughter to the Prince of Conde.

Monsieur de Sévigné to his sister.

IN a word, my dear sister, we are so tired and teased with the length of time that my mother's complaint has lasted, and with the treacherous manner in which this wicked leg has behaved, that I order her to go to Rennes, where the Capuchin Friars of the Louvre will not lose sight of her, her leg is unswelled, and curing apace, but we have been so often caught, and like Punch's butterfly so often escaped, that to terminate your uneasiness and ours, we send my mother to the source of all skill. You have heard that the happy couple remain here with the good Abbé.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

To the same.

Rennes, April 29, 1685.

ISHOULD, my dear child, accept Madame de Marbœuf's kind and generous offer of staying here, which I know to be perfectly sincere, if my leg did not mend daily, and you know what it is to lie under an obligation which we cannot return in as agreeable a manner as it is conferred. I therefore am going to the Rocks to watch the proceedings of this

leg, which is now without either swelling or wound; its colour indeed is not charming; nothing makes it white; neither fomentations or Arquebuse water. There are still marks of its having been in the wars, which will last some time. I know not if I am to believe in the sympathetic powers of the herbs which are applied to the wound, but I seem to grow better as soon as they rot in the earth, where they are buried after I have used them. I was tempted to laugh of this, but the Friars who have tried this experiment so long, believe it. I have at no time been so well as at present, but if it does not continue, be assured that I will seek my cure near you. But, my dearest, you have alarmed me much by hinting that if I return sooner on account of my leg, you will not run the risk of departing without seeing me. Good God, my dear child, what can you mean? do not deceive me upon this subject. I should be in despair if I returned to Paris and did not find you there. You told me your affairs would detain you till September. I am hurrying mine which are numerous, but I would risk every thing rather than not see you. It is in your power to decide for me—let reason and affection (both which you possess) settle the matter. You know my affairs—you know how much I love you—my destiny is in your hands. I am uneasy for the poor Chevalier—his complaint seems a singular one. It is unfortunate that the rains which have been so

beneficial to the world should be so hurtful to him. His sensations may indeed be called pains and sufferings. What is more dreadful than want of breath? every attitude and situation equally miserable. M. de Grignan's fever seems less formidable. Do not however suffer him to be too often bled; the physicians have no pity. But to return to my first subject, Madame de Marbœuf, she has read with pleasure what you say of her. No one sets a higher value upon your esteem. She makes me spend my time here most agreeably—music and good company employ our hours. Yesterday I took an airing round the Ring, rather with the air of a person indisposed, than that I really was so—but I chose to avoid making visits. I received one from the Princess of Bade who told me all the history (which I knew before) of her violent anger, equal at least to that of Achilles, and also of her exile. I returned her visit in the evening, and finding she was not likely to tire of talking, gave her a patient hearing of three hours. I had my leg upon a stool, as without that precaution I might have run the risk of making Harlequin's mistake, that of not knowing the bad leg from the sound one. This is my history, let me hear yours. I leave this place to-morrow much against Madame de Marbœuf's inclination, but the good Abbé languishes in my absence. The Friars deire their humble respects, and assure you they will make a perfect cure of me. They

think the powder of crab's eyes, in a spoonful of milk, would do wonders in the Duke de Lude's case; his situation deserves compassion.

LETTER CCLXXIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, June 13, 1685.

I MUST now talk to you of M. de Chaulnes; he writes to me that the Assembly of States are at Dinan—he will preside there in August—he says a thousand droll things about you, and seems in great spirits. I love these good people. The Duchess tells me many little secrets. I cannot comprehend that any body can hate or envy that couple. I rejoice that you are in their interests.

I beg of you to remark what is the fashionable dress for men this summer, and send some pretty silks for your brother. Let them come in time to be worn at the reception of our Governors. I also wish you to consult Madame de Chaulnes as to the proper dress for me to appear in at Rennes, for as to the States I beg to be excused. I have a brown silk, trimmed with silver, with drawn up sleeves, but that I believe is no longer in fashion, and I will not be ridiculous at Rennes where every thing is

magnificent. I shall be glad to dress according to your taste. Take care however to have simplicity and economy always before your eyes. You will know sooner than I shall the proper time to send me these things. You may believe that I shall fly to receive the Chaulnes, having a horror for all the ungrateful creatures they have met with, and being very unwilling to resemble them.

You preserve a sort of romantic admiration for the Princes of Conti.* I blame them for quitting such a father-in-law as the King, and not trusting to the chance of his giving them enough of war. Good God, they need but have had patience. Nobody doubted their courage—why play the part of Adventurers and Knight Errants? Their cousins of Condè have not wanted opportunities of distinguishing themselves, and they would have had the means.

* The Prince of Conti, and his brother, left France privately to serve under the Emperor in Hungary. Prince Eugene followed their example---they were all long in disgrace with the King. At length Madame de Maintenon obtained the pardon of the two Princes of Conti.

June 17

HOW rejoiced I am to hear that you are at Livry and your mind freed from all business at Paris. You say a number of tender things upon the recollection of your poor mother, and the good Abbè, which that spot excites. Although you formerly used to praise the wit which could counterfeit the feelings of the heart, depend upon it the impostor is soon detected. It stumbles in the path which true affection alone can tread, and those who are acquainted with the genuine language of the heart, cannot be deceived. You seem an enthusiast in praising Livry. You have imbibed all my prejudices, and are my own child. I wish that passion may last the whole year—but where do you find that nightingales are to be heard on the 13th of June? They are occupied with the care of their little family—they think at this season neither of singing or making love—more solid thoughts employ them—not one have we heard here. We have a moon as beautiful as yours at Livry, and we pay our respects to it. The mall is charming; it resembles a spacious Belvidere, from whence the country is seen to the extent of three leagues towards M. de La Trimouille's forest.

You make me weep over the Chevalier. Is he really so lame, and obliged to be carried from one place to the other? how melancholy. M. de Grig-

nan's health does not please me at all—but while his bile is in agitation, these sensations must be expected. I wish to God our Capuchin Friars were near enough to prescribe for him. They have sent me some Essence of Emeralds, which smells divinely; heals and softens every part of my leg, and makes my cure perfect. Adieu my dear child, present my kindest remembrance to all the inhabitants of Livry.

LETTER CCLXXX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 1, 1685.

IF the fancy took me to say that I would set off for Paris next month, I see nothing to hinder me. So far am I arrived, my dear child, by dint of wishing and dragging on the days heavy, or light, as it has pleased Providence to bestow them, I will, according to your example, give way to the hope of embracing you next month. My leg is quite well; it is now six weeks since I have seen any thing like a wound. I shall follow the advice of the Friars which is to forget my leg, and not be continually asking it how it does. At Paris I should certainly think of it no more. You seem to wish to inspire

your husband with that kind of negligence—you think him better since he went to Versailles—you paint divinely the manner in which people forget themselves in that part of the world, although in fact self is their first object; but it is hidden under an appearance of being carried off by the whirlwind which affects every body. So great you say are the blandishments of a Court, that it is with difficulty we discover that in all our movements self is the only consideration. It was something that the King made enquiries into the state of your sick; it is some comfort to poor courtiers who live upon his smiles. You will have seen by my last letter that your brother will approve of whatever you do, and will be happy to be dressed by your hand. His wife laughed heartily at reading the account of all the colours you will not send him; although you promise him an elegant trimming, you may also dress his head according to your taste, provided you are moderate in the expence. He says like a certain Duke, ‘ I will marry who you please, provided it be Mademoiselle Hortensia. As for me, my dearest, do with me what you please—you are at the fountain head of fashion,

LETTER CCLXXXI.

*To the same.**At the Rocks, July 22, 1685.*

IT is certain that after having told you twenty times that I was perfectly cured, and having tried in the strongest manner to convince you of what I myself believed, you have a right to pay no more attention to any thing I say upon the subject. The honour of curing me seems at last reserved for the poor Princess of Tarente's soft and mild applications, and for the wonderful and clever woman who comes every day to dress my leg. I assure you that my general health is not at all impaired. I am now under the management of the good Princess, and the excellent nurse she gave me, a woman approved of by the Friars, who cures every body at Vitré, and whom Providence would not allow me to meet with sooner, that I might be mortified in a part which I feel most sensibly—but enough of this subject, I am sparing of it to others, but your affection makes me tell you so many particulars.

Shall I own my weakness? I read with pleasure

the history of our ancient chivalry. If Bussi * had said less of himself, and of his heroine of a daughter; the rest being true, the book might appear tolerable enough to be kept in a closet without making the author very vain. He treats you very well, and tries by loading me with praises, (which I do not deserve) to obliterate the remembrance of his former abuse which was equally unmerited. † He passes lightly over my son, but he might however have treated his wife better, since she descends from some of the first families in the province. To say the truth your brother has spared Bussi so little, and treated him with so little civility, that after having done him justice as to the greatness of his family, he might be excused saying more—you behaved better to him, and he returns you the favour.

I shall be delighted to see the good Chaulnes and little Coulanges; but I assure you that if I was not quite well enough I would not attempt the journey. I wish nothing so much as to recover completely,

* See the dedication which M. de Bussi Rabutin had intended to place at the head of his *Memoires*. It is in the first volume of his *Letters*.

† Bussi not being able to attack Madame de Sevigne's reputation in his '*Histoire Amoureux des Gaules*,' tried to throw a degree of ridicule upon her actions which was by no means deserved.

that I may set out for Paris the beginning of September. I am convinced that you will be at Fontainebleau till the Court goes to Chambor. Apropos will our Coadjutor be made Archbishop of Aix? I am told that he will. Your brother does not think of stirring from home, his affairs will not permit him to go to Paris for some years—his whim is to pay his debts, and having no extraordinary funds for that purpose, he must set aside a part of his income. As to me I do not aspire to the happiness of paying every thing; but I expect a farmer who owes me eleven thousand francs, and whose face I never yet have been able to see—nothing shall prevent my being faithful to the time I have appointed to return to you, not having less impatience than yourself to see the end of so melancholy an absence. I must however do justice to the air of the Rocks, it is perfectly good—there would have been no difficulty in obtaining a cure for my leg, had I fallen at first into good hands.

LETTER CCLXXXII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 1, 1685.

I RETURNED yesterday evening from my long journey, my dearest child. I bid our good Governors adieu on Monday, begging their pardons 'for quitting them before I saw them hanged' I own I was happy at having been able to perform this journey in compliment to them. It was a proof of friendship I owed in return for all those I receive from them. It seemed to me that at Dol I was in the palace of Atlante. All the names I had ever heard of, seemed to surround me without my being able to see the originals. The First President, Messieurs de la Trimouille, Lavardin, de Charost, and d'Harrouis, were only three miles from us, yet we could not meet. Dear Coulanges would absolutely pass a week with us at the Rocks, and your brother would not give up the opportunity of returning with him, consequently they are both here most comfortably settled till the 8th of this month. They will pass the last fortnight at the States, and then your brother who entreats me on his knees to wait for him, will return to give one embrace, and I shall set off immediately and shall

be at Baviile the 9th or 10th of September. I feel my approaching happiness—no longer will months intervene—we have done with calculations—the common almanack will now regulate our motions. I have had no pain, no fever, nor any of the ills your imagination gave me.

Monsieur de Coulanges to Madame de Grignan.

I HAVE seen the time when I wrote to your good mother in your letters, now I write to you in hers, for I have fixed myself for a week at the Rocks, to rest from all my fatigues. Madame de Sévigné has given you the particulars of her excursion to Dol. Nothing could be more fortunate than the journey, except, indeed, that we were twice overturned in a pond; but as I am a famous swimmer I saved her from all danger, and even prevented her being in the least wet. Am I not a charming companion? Nothing can exceed the beauty of the long shady walks at the Rocks. I am going to parade up and down them, and confess that after having taken a great deal of exercise it will be hard not to meet with exactly such a great dinner as I was accustomed to at M. de Seignelais. Adieu beautiful Countess, give me leave to embrace you with all due respect and to present my compliments to all the party of Grignans that surround you.

Madame de Sévigné in continuation.

August 8.

IF you could manage to prevent the first day of September falling upon a Saturday, or the good Abbè's having learnt from his forefathers to prefer Monday to Saturday, that he may not travel upon a Sunday, I should be able to keep faithfully to the time appointed, but this rule which he keeps to as rigidly as to the wings of a chicken or the breast of a partridge, will make us arrive two days later than we intended.

We are extremely surprised at the news you sent us.* The Princess had not heard it till yesterday, when she made many exclamations quite in the German style. We imagine that the exiled youths will have many more companions. What an affliction for the Cardinal de Bouillon to be involved in

* The Princes of Conti, &c after leaving Paris without the King's permission wrote some letters to their friends and relations full of free and impertinent reflections upon the King's connexion with Madame de Maintenon. These letters were carried to him and gave him a severe pang; as in addition to the ingratitude of the writers, it was evident that they were answers to as free reflections from those who were every day with the King, and receiving marks of his favour and affection. See 'Memoires de Maintenon by La Beaumelle.'

this boyish business. What madness in their whole proceedings. I doubt this affair will make a lasting impression at Paris. It may be stifled at Versailles, but it concerns too many people not to occasion much affliction. It seems surprising that so much madness and folly should originate in so wise a Court and under such a master.

Monsieur de Coulanges to Madame de Grignan.

HERE I am still. I cannot bear to leave this mother of beauty. We walk without ceasing, and her leg is in perfect good humour, and grows more handsome than ever. Your brother, by his animation, when he plays in the mall, reminds me of M. de Grignan whose petulance, begging his pardon, we do not forget. We had yesterday the good Princess of Tarente here, and I assure you she has much less pomp about her than the wife of the President de C——. Nor is the Princess herself half so jealous of her rank as that lady who wept like a child at the Assembly of States because the First President of Accompts insisted upon having an arm chair as well as her husband. I have been writing to all the Presidents' wives at Paris to tell them that they are not acquainted with their privileges, and that they must come to Brittany to be taught.

LETTER CCLXXXIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 17, 1685.

WE now, as you see, count only by days, it is no longer months or weeks; but alas as you truly say, can we feel a more severe alloy than the painful prospect of parting again so soon—but I drive this thought from me that I may be in a proper temper of mind to meet you with rapture at Baviile. I shall not be ashamed of my equipage. My children have handsome ones, so had I once, but times and circumstances alter. I have now only 2 pair of horses. I shall hire four more, and not be in the least disturbed at arriving thus.

Coulanges sat out on Monday. I conducted them as far as the gate on the road to Vitre—we were all there waiting for letters from Paris—they arrived and we read yours. You mention Madame d'Ormessou's being at the last gasp; when you tell me she is absolutely buried, I will attempt comforting her husband by a proper letter. You describe her situation to be such, that her death must be wished for by herself and family. Ah my dear child, how terrible it must be to support the dregs of our bodily and mental powers. How humiliating, how far

more desirable to die while our faculties are unimpaired, and leave to posterity an idea of us worthy of being preserved, rather than to be spoilt and disfigured by the miseries of life and the infirmities which age brings upon us. I should like to live in that country where, from motives of affection, children put their aged parents to death, if that custom could be made conformable to Christianity.

Our gentlemen supped, or rather feasted, Monday at the good Marbœuf's. Your brother is not yet quite well. I have had inimitable conversations with Coulanges upon the subject he has so much trouble to comprehend. We had scenes worthy of Moliere.

The correspondence between Madame de Sévigné and her daughter was interrupted for near two years as they remained together at Paris till the month of September, 1687, when Madame de Sévigné went to Bourbon for her health.

LETTER CCLXXXIV.

To Madame de Grignan.

Nevers, September 20, 1687.

I RECEIVED your letter this morning at la Charité. You were wrong in your calculations as to the places where we slept. We know nothing of your Pont Agasson, but came by Milli. You have also excuses to make to the weather which you accused of treachery. Never, no never, was there any more enchanting, or more lasting. The roads we found wonderfully fine—we were not stopped one moment, bowling greens and gravel walks every where. All the hills levelled, and the famous Rue d'Enfer, a perfect road to Paradise—only that indeed is said to be narrow and steep, while this is wide and agreeable. If ever I go to Lyons, God preserve me from taking any road but this. Here we are at Nevers; we intended being to-morrow at Moulins, but, by the advice of a Madame Ferret, we shall greatly shorten the journey. I shall doubly rejoice at losing no time, that we may the sooner see you coming to meet us. Many things have this time made me prefer Bourbon to Vichi. Nothing can exceed the Duchess of Chaulne's attention and kindness to me. She makes no professions, but I

see she is happy to have me. I am not surprised that you admired Savigné, it is a beautiful spot. If there are any of your letters at Moulins they will follow me to Bourbon. I am impatient to hear news of the King's health, and of M. de Grignan's, of his concerns, and of yours. I wish you may have informed your brother of the road M. de Chaulnes has taken, that he may meet him at Fongeres. Pray give the Coulanges an account of my proceedings—I cannot doubt the interest they take in them.

Bourbon, September 22. .

WE arrived here yesterday evening from Nevers where I began this letter. To be sure, my dear child, we did perform the journey in one day; but good God what a day—what a dreadful thirty miles—we sat out early in the morning and did not arrive till it was dark, yet only stopped two hours to dine. We had constant rain, detestable roads, were often obliged to leave the carriage and walk, lest we should be overturned in horrid ditches. All these troubles fell upon us after having travelled five enchanting days enlivened with a bright sun and through a beautiful country. We now think ourselves in another climate, a low and woody country, like Brittany, and dark forests, through which the sun can scarcely penetrate. We were received

here by the Madame Ferret, I mentioned. We have Madame de Montespan's lodgings, and slept extremely well. We have seen some little fog, and been to mass at the Convent of Capuchins, have already received many visits. I like my physician extremely, his name is Amiot; he knows and esteems Alliot, and adores our good Friar Jacob. Amiot is a rational practitioner, and an enemy to bleeding—He tells me that all my ills proceed from the spleen, and that the waters of Bourbon are a specific remedy. Madame de Chaulne's complaint is too serious to be neglected—these waters are good for her. We have excellent apartments and very near each other; but one may say of this place that Heaven never favoured it with a smile. I long to know particulars of your husband's health and of yours. I am alarmed at those fevers said to be prevalent at Versailles. God preserve you my dear child. I hear Madame de Coulanges is going to settle herself at Brevanes. What a pleasure to be in the country—I shall want such a treat when I go from hence. Adieu.

LETTER CCLXXXV.

To the same.

Bourbon, September 25, 1687.

I HAVE received your letter of the 22d; its contents have given me much ease of mind. You tell me of the wise and good resolution you have taken of remaining at Paris this winter. I can see that you will not want business. I understand all the King's politeness, but I should like to have heard that he did something more. God's will be done. You have put a stop to my complaints by reminding me of whom I complain. The bark has it seems effected upon the King one of its usual miracles. I hear an account of the Duke of Burgundy's* illness, which is very alarming. You ask for news of myself. I have taken the waters two days; they are mild and pleasant, and not heavy upon the stomach. I shall not drink those of Vichi which are procured here in one day. Never was there a more perfect union between two rivals. The waters from Vichi are heated in the hottest of these wells, and drank in the same manner as the others. We

* Grandson to Louis XIV. and father to Louis XV.

lead a very proper life for invalids. Madame de Chaulnes and I are the stoutest of the party. Madame de Nangis is very much to be pitied; she suffers such violent pains in her stomach that it frequently throws her into convulsions. Mademoiselle d'Armentieres is in a rapid decline, and Madame de Fourchi, who is just come from Vichi, tells us she means to complete her cure at Bourbon, and with this fine cure so well began, she is in an absolute lethargy. She sleeps, or wants to sleep, three hours after dinner, and during that time her legs feel like wool. One cannot help pitying her for being so satisfied that she is recovering. Barthelot's brother is in a deplorable state of health with some remains of apoplexy. The most disagreeable thing here is the sight of such complaints. The baths recover some, but leave many as bad as ever. I am so much better than the rest of the company, that I ought not to quit a place where I am the most fortunate. Madame de Chaulnes is in the same predicament. Nothing can exceed the care she takes of me—she thinks more of my health than of her own. Adieu my dear child for the present. I embrace M. de Grignan most affectionately; his interests are mine. I hold to you both by a thousand ties. I pity the Chevalier's melancholy and suffering state. My dear Marquis I love you.

Saturday, September 27.

THERE are hours when we may write and this is one. I received your letter with that pleasure and emotion to which you are no stranger since certainly you love me. We have here a number of maimed people, and many half dead who seek for relief from the boiling waters of these wells. Some are satisfied, others are not. Many of the ills arise from apoplexy, or the fear of that dreadful ill—these are dreadful objects. Amiot will tell you all his reasons for what I am doing; but when you have read his long scrawl you will not be much wiser than at present. Saturday I resume the Bourbon waters. I shall take a delicious bath, and when the hour is nearly expired, Amiot intends to add a little hot water which will promote the perspiration we require. Banish, I entreat you, all uneasiness concerning me—you will see me in a short time in perfect health. I ask of Heaven to preserve you and M. de Grignan, and to give a larger dose of patience to the poor Chevalier—some of that virtue will be necessary to enable you to bear all that happens to you. If we allowed ourselves to think at Bourbon, the idea of your cares would be insupportable; but we are absolute Automatons—we drag our poor inanimate figures to make visits—we

are seen about the streets, but have no souls—they would be too troublesome during a course of physick—we shall resume them again when we return to Paris. Here is Madame de Chaulnes who scolds me, she scarcely knows for what, and embraces the handsome Countess. All Bourbon is employed this day in writing letters—to-morrow they will be doing *something else*—we are as regular as at a Convent. You talk to me of the dews, but where could I find any? There must be air to meet with dew. We live in the most simple manner, no sauces, no ragouts. I hope next winter to throw off all my regularity in your charming hotel.

LETTER CCLXXXVI.

To the same.

Bourbon, October 7, 1687.

YOU also pretend to scold me instead of entering into the pleasure of knowing me in better health than I have ever enjoyed. I have been fortunate in avoiding the trouble of going to Vichi, since I have had the waters brought here. You scold me too for writing; alas it is my delight. I

should suffer a great deal in giving it up. Every body here writes as well as me. I never send more than a dozen lines to Madame de La Fayette—can you call that writing?

We have beautiful weather. I am happy to hear that the Chevalier's health is likely to permit us to make our melancholy adieus to Livry. We shall be at Paris on the 19th, according to our present arrangement. I want to embrace Mesdames de La Fayette and de Lavardin, and then go to my dear child to breathe at liberty the country air, and take as much exercise as I please. If you return to Paris I shall be delighted—the business for us is to meet that we may pass together as much of our lives as it pleases God to allow us. I dare not depend too much upon these arrangements lest Providence should disapprove; yet these are things which seem as if they naturally might go on. I hope our good friend Corbinelli will visit us at Livry; we shall enjoy our last moments there till somebody pushes us out by the shoulders.*

I am quite pleased with having made this excursion—it is thought here that my fears greatly exceeded my little ills. If you love me and are

* The Abbaye of Livry was vacant since the 23d of August 1687, when the good Abbe, uncle to Madame de Sevigne, died at a very advanced age.

pleased with the attentions and care that I have received, what do you not owe to the good Duchess of Chaulnes.

At this time the correspondence between Madame de Sévigné and her daughter suffered an interruption of a year, as they remained at Paris together till the beginning of October 1688, when Madame de Grignan returned to Provence.

LETTER CCLXXXVII.

To Madame de Grignan.

Paris, October 8, 1688.

WE are in despair, my dear child, at the rainy weather; you are just going over that dreadful mountain of Rochepot, the descent of which is so dangerous. How many cares and anxieties are the attendants of true affection—we cannot love each other with heroism. The poor Chevalier has still the gout which is really melancholy. He is surrounded with clever men who try to amuse him with public events.

Our little Marquis will not have been at the opening of the trenches, as Vauban would not wait for

the Dauphin on account of the rains. We are still of opinion that in a few days your mind may be at ease. The Prince of Orange has declared himself Protector of the Protestant Religion in England, and demands the little Prince to educate him. This is a great event; many lords have joined him. You know that La Trousse has taken Avignon. Madame de Coulanges, who is overflowing with money, has lent Mademoiselle de Meri (who we expect here every day) a thousand francs, which her brother will return. I am perfectly comfortable. The Chevalier and I talk over our affairs together. I find in him all the comfort that can be expected from a well informed mind, and the best of hearts. Corbinelli will come with his philosophy this evening. We have written in all the apartments, *do as you please, long live holy liberty.*

I have seen Madame de Fontenille who has lost her mother—she is overcome with sorrow—you may believe that I feel for her. Her poor mother died full of horrors, exclaiming ‘must I die? Is there no remedy?’ Shewing the utmost aversion to receiving the sacraments which however were administered, while she preserved a profound and dreadful silence—her son and Alliot arrived two hours after her death. Adieu for the present, my dear child, we cannot comfort ourselves for your loss, every one exclaiming, ‘Nothing can restore the blessing I have lost.’

We are surrounded by your pictures. The Princess is very handsome, but we wish for *her* who now perhaps is sinking in the mnddy soil of Rochepot.

Monday, October 11.

I HAVE received your two letters from Joigni and Auxerre—the road to the latter is dreadful. I see you travelling on with a heart torn with anguish. You would certainly have been less unhappy here, as public news would have reached you sooner. You will hear that all the ladies who have husbands, sons, brothers, cousins, or what you please, embarked in this business; do not fail to eat, sleep, go and come, talk, argue and hope to see again the objects of their solicitude; and it puts me in despair when I reflect that instead of following their example you have retired to solitude with such a dreadful companion, and without solace—a heart oppressed by misery yet ideal. My dear child if it be possible have pity upon yourself and us—you are in greater danger than your son.

Public events occupy every body—the Abbè Bigorre triumphs. Madame de Coulanges's brother is dead. It is the fashion to say the Friars killed him, but I say it was death. I saw my dear widows yesterday who love and esteem you. Adieu my beloved, I never can be happy without you.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII.

To the same.

Paris, October 13, 1688.

WE are in daily expectation of letters from you. We follow you step by step—you will be to-morrow at Lyons. We have every reason to believe that Philisbourg will not keep us long in our present misery. You will learn by the Chevalier's letters that the Dauphin has made the tour of the place. No cannon was fired—the trenches are safe and well constructed, that there is every reason to hope that all will succeed according to our wishes.

It is hoped that the Prince of Orange will be mistaken in his plans and that the King of England will meet and beat him completely. He has spoken to his lords, and allowed those who were ill affected to leave him, and given new warmth to the attachment of those he can depend upon. He has proclaimed perfect liberty of conscience, and placed the Count de-Roye, who is a zealous Calvinist, at the head of his cavalry—this satisfies his people. In short, my dear child, what shall I tell you, I know you heed me not; you think of nothing but your son, and you are right.

October 15.

IT is now a week since we have heard from you ; how long the time appears. Madame de La Fayette has just heard from her son that yours was well. Madame de Lavardin has been mourning over Jarzé, who, in passing from the trenches to go to the Dauphin, had his wrist taken off by a cannon ball. His arm was immediately amputated below the elbow—this is a sad accident for a young man ; however nothing can exceed the precautions taken by Vauban to preserve the lives of the besiegers. The Dauphin is the first person seen upon the trenches—the Duke of Bourbon, and the Prince of Conti, shew but too much courage. My dear child, all will go well ; for heaven's sake take care of your own health, and be as patient as the wives and mothers we see here.

October 18.

WE have received your letter from Chalons—it came the day after we had complained so heavily of your silence. So far your son continues in good health, and has done wonders ; he sees and hears cannon balls without any emotion. He has mounted the trenches, and gives an account of the seige to his uncle like an old soldier. He has often the honour of dining with the Dauphin, who treats

him with great kindness. I must talk a little of your journey—my dear Count you ought to be ashamed of yourself. I knew that the mountain of Rochepot had a precipice near it which was concealed by a low hedge, and that the road was full of large stones. Thank God this road, dreadful as it is, you have past over with safety. You must return by another if Providence permits it. We suppose that you will embark to day upon the Rhone after having gone round by Thésè*. The weather here is dreadful; the Chevalier is still a sufferer with a weakness in his legs—he requires all the strength of mind which he possesses, to bear with a state so inimical to what he calls his duties. He cannot go to Fontainebleau, where he has much business. You wish me to talk to you of my health, and the life I lead. I have been a little heated, have had bad nights, have shed tears, and felt sorrow; those things are not wholesome, and it is that experience which alarms me for you. I have cured myself with veal broth. You know how I spend my life—I call frequently upon Madame de Lavardin and Madame de La Fayette. Yesterday I was at the Marchioness d'Huxelles—Paris is quite empty. I return home in the evening, go to bed, and rise in the morning; yet

* An estate belonging to M. de Grignan's brother-in-law, M. de Rochebonne.

even in this way life passes rapidly because time does.

You may be assured that I shall not quit Paris either during the siege of Philisbourg, or while the Chevalier is here. I am naturally fixed by those two circumstances. Do not fear, however, that I shall be foolish enough to starve myself. I eat my little pittance with a heavy heart, but still I eat.

Madame de Vins has been very uneasy, not having heard of her husband, but now she is easy for he is at the siege of Philisbourg, consequently in a place of security. If the air and noise of Grignan are hurtful to you, go to La Garde, that will always be my opinion. Are you much pleased with Paulina? how happy she is in being near you and obliged to love you.

LETTER CCLXXXIX.

To the same.

Paris, October 23, 1688.

MY first subject must be your dear son; nothing is more easy to comprehend than all your sensations. Can you believe that we have not the same? but we receive news every day while you languish a week. We know that the Dauphin often

mounts the trenches, and was covered the other day with earth, raised by a cannon ball. The Chevalier's opinion is my guide; he is convinced that the seige will soon be concluded, and that Vauban being master and not hurried, will be more careful of the lives of the men than ever he was. You know what merit he has always had on that score. The Dauphin is adored; he is extremely liberal; he makes presents to the wounded—he sent three hundred Louis to the Marquis de Nesle—he assists those who have no camp equipage. The King reads his letters publicly—in a word, this first campaign with the Dauphin is an event of great consequence to your son.

October 25.

BY the impatience with which we expect your letters, the regularity with which we send to meet them at the post, we are worthy of the attention with which you write to us. I always speak in the plural because the Chevalier and I have the same feelings and sentiments. I enclose a letter from your son, dated the 18th. You will see by all M. du Plessis writes that he will not make his relations blush—but remark the arrangements of Providence, the rain prevented the Marquis and his regiment from being present at the most brilliant engagement that has yet taken place, it was carrying off a

horn work on the 19th. The Princes and the young officers are in despair at not having been at this agreeable battle. The Chevalier diverts me exceedingly; he is happy that the Marquis was not in the last engagement, and yet grieves at his having lost that opportunity of distinguishing himself; but we must have patience—let us hope my dear child, that every thing will terminate according to our wishes.

Madame de Longueval (the Canoness) is dead of a suffocation in her throat. She hated Bussi's daughter most heartily. I am always sorry when such hatreds are carried into the other world.

LETTER CCXC.

To the same.

Paris, All Saint's Day, 1688.

IT is long since I have passed this festival at Paris; it absolutely appears strange—a concert of bells will tease us this evening. Corbinelli would be charmed with them, but I have scarcely patience with the noise, not being in my usual good spirits. We are so busy in taking Philisbourg that I would not for a moment place myself at a distance from the seat of news. It is that anxiety which makes me

pity you, my dear child, left as you are at the mercy of your imagination, the most cruel and tormenting of companions. M. de Vauban has desired the King to name a proper governor for the place he is going to take. It is expected that it will be ours upon this day in honour of the Dauphin.* I pity the Chevalier very much; the gout worries him, sometimes in one hand, sometimes in the other. We eat together in the small room. I am destined to inhabit that little cell—coffee is quite out of fashion. The Chevalier thinks it heating and irritating to his blood; and I am such an imitative animal, as you well know, that I have also left it off. Rice has taken its place—coffee may again come into favour next winter. The Abbé Bigorne is really the best friend and most agreeable inmate one can have. The Chevalier is pleased to have him. Mademoiselle de Meri finds here a very good society, but her apartment kills me because it was yours. What do you do with Paulina? Why not take her with you? I have given Madame de La Fayette a description of her. She thinks you cannot too strongly attach yourself to such a child. She advises you to observe the turn of her mind, and to manage her according to the observations you make. She approves of your conversing with her

* The Dauphin was born on the 1st of November, 1661.

familiarly, making her work and read by you; let her listen to you and exercise her genius and her memory.

Poor Jaizé is at last out of danger; his mother and wife are partly comforted for his misfortune in the hope that he will now be contented to live in his Castle with them. I fancy no seige will be undertaken after that of Philisbourg—one of such importance, as you say, is enough at seventeen. * Sanzie is with the army like every body else. Adieu my dearest, do not believe, I entreat you, that we can cease regretting you, or ever accustom ourselves to the loss of the most brilliant ornaments of our house.

LETTER CCXCI. †

To the same.

Paris, nine o'clock at night, All Saint's Day, 1688.

PHILISBOURG is taken and your son is safe.

I have nothing to do but to turn that phrase a hundred different ways. We have just heard that

* The young Marquis de Grignan was born in November 1671.

† This and the next ten or twelve letters were never before translated.

the courier, sent by the Dauphin, arrived at Fontainebleau while Father Gaillard was preaching. The sermon was interrupted, and thanks publicly returned to God for so great a conquest. It was taken by assault, and M. du Plessis was right when he said that the Governor had been preparing waggons to carry off his equipage. You may now my dearest be perfectly at ease, and humbly thank the Almighty for such a blessing. Every thing has happened as we could wish. It is you, my dear Count, we are to thank upon this occasion. I feel your satisfaction, and beg my congratulations may also be offered to the Coadjutor.

LETTER CCXCII.

To the same.

Paris, November 5, 1688.

I TOOK yesterday a little physick after the manner of my good Friars. I am now perfectly well. It was painful to me not to see you taking possession of my chamber early in the morning, questioning me upon my sensations, examining and managing me most tenderly, and ready to assist me upon the least appearance of fainting. Oh my dear child, how pleasing, how delightful are such atten-

tions—how heavily have I sighed at being deprived of these natural proofs of your affection—how I missed the accustomed process—your coffee brought to you in my chamber—your toilet arriving, and your morning visitors seeking you near me, and from whom I secluded myself by making a wainscoat of my curtains. Indeed, my dear child, in losing you I make an irreparable loss. There is a charm which accompanies all your actions, and no friendship resembles yours. You spoil the trade and make every other attachment appear flat and insipid after having tasted of yours. M. de La Garde had thus described you formerly to me, and I believed that upon some occasions you had concealed those treasures from me; but you have thrown off the veil. I know the excellence of your heart which is full of tenderness for your mother. It is a felicity which was reserved for the end of my life, and which is only crossed by your absence—but that my dear child will finish, while your affection will last for ever.

The Chevalier has paid me a visit, and returned with that teasing pain which hovers over his foot. It is a great affliction to him, and a misfortune to you. How useful he would be to your son at Versailles, and to your affairs. We must not dwell upon this—God will have it so. Without that reflection what should we do. Mademoiselle de Meri would come to nurse me but was seized with such

hysterical complaints that she was obliged to run away. Thus is our poor hotel become an hospital. The Abbè Bigorre is the comfort of every apartment—he supports us all. So far I have written in expectation of your letters.

Five o'clock in the evening.

THE weather is dreadful, and your letters not arrived. I, unworthy as I am, have undertaken to nurse the Chevalier who is in bed with the gout in his knees—he will however write to you—he expects every moment to be well. We have been talking of your son—we shall wait for him here. It appears to us that his going to Provence is unnecessary; it would be a needless expence—he had better make his advantage this winter of the glory acquired in his campaign. We also think that Monsieur du Plessis, although full of good qualities, would be a heavy charge upon your purse, and of no use to the Marquis here, a Governor not being wanted at Court, and still less at the army. Tomorrow, my dear child, your heart will be filled with joy; you will learn that Philisbourg is taken and your son safe. Every body here is convinced that Manheim will surrender without even being asked. Sleep then in peace and begin as soon as you can to put all your good intentions in practice.

It is reported that the Prince of Orange is em-

barked, and that much firing has been heard; but this has been said so often that I do not give it you for a truth. Adieu my dearest, my beloved child—the more we see the sentiments of some certain persons, the more we are charmed with yours. I do not speak of Brittany;* with our friends there I am satisfied—but I will tell you one day a proof of ingratitude which I have related to the Chevalier, and of which having disburthened my heart, I shall think no more. Madame de Caitries has just left me—she deserves a thousand compliments upon the fortunate event of Philisbourg.

LETTER CCXCIII.

To the same.

Paris, November 8, 1688.

THIS is the day, my dear child, on which you are to begin your journey. We follow you in idea step by step—the weather is beautiful—the Durance will not be as terrible as it sometimes is. You seem to go farther from us as if you were angry; at last you will find yourself on the borders of the sea. Heaven ordains that there should be

* Alluding to her son who resided there.

times in our life difficult to get over, and we must try by a proper submission to make up for our feeling too sensibly what, as his *will*, ought to be borne without a murmur. On these points I am more culpable than any body.

The Chevalier is much better; the cruel part of the story is, that the weather which agrees with him is exactly that which will dethrone the King of England. All these last days he suffered exceedingly while the elements were dispersing the Prince of Orange's fleet. The Chevalier laments as a misfortune not being able to make his health accord with the interests of Europe; for I assure you that the failure of the Princes' plans occasions universal joy. His wife* is a Tullia;† truly she would pass most willingly over the body of her father. She has enabled her husband to take possession of the kingdom of England, of which she calls herself the right heiress; and if the Prince of Orange is killed (her imagination you see is not very delicate) Marshal Schomberg‡ is to act for

* Mary Stewart, daughter of James II. King of Great Britain, and wife to William Henry of Nassau, Prince of Orange, afterwards King of England, under the name of William III.

† Tullia, daughter of Servius Tullius, King of Rome, and wife of Tarquin, ordered her chariot to pass over the bleeding body of her father who has just been assassinated.

‡ Frederick Armand, Count de Schomberg, Marshal of

her. What say you to this hero who thus disgraces the close of so honourable a life? He saw the Admiral's ship sink in which he was going to embark. The Prince and him were the last, and were to follow the fleet which sailed by very fine weather. They saw the storm arise, and were glad to return to port—the Prince very ill with his asthma, and Marshal Schomberg excessively vexed. Only six and twenty ships returned with them; the rest were scattered on the Coast of Norway and Boulogne. Monsieur d'Aumont sent a courier to the King to acquaint him that he had seen vessels floating at the mercy of the waves, and some pieces of a wreck, a ship armed *en flutte*, in which were nine hundred men, foundered in sight of the Prince of Orange. In short the hand of God is visibly upon this fleet. Many indeed may return, but it will be long before they are able to do any mischief, since they have been completely dispersed, and at a time when it was least expected. It really looks like a miracle, and a stroke of Providence. I ought not to talk to you of this great event since the Gazettes are full of it; but as we are as much so, and

France obtained permission to retire from the King's service in 1688; the cause was his embracing the Protestant religion. He had been Minister of State and General of the Armies of Brandebourg. He went to England in 1688 with the Prince of Orange.

as no other subject is talked of, it falls naturally from my pen. Shall I tell you of another instance of wounds not received at the siege of Philisbourg. The town was taken, and the Dauphin advancing to see the garrison pass, the little Chevalier de Longueville mounted the trenches to look at something, when a soldier, aiming at a woodcock, shot the poor little fellow, who died the next day. This death is as singular as his birth.*. I am flattered by your recollection of Livry. Great was my attachment to that sweet place, and great is my regret at no longer possessing it.

Monsieur de La Bazincire is dead of a mortification in his leg, but with the courage of Mars, he soon followed his daughter, of whom he continued to complain even after her death.

I shall be anxious to know how you feel after having increased the distance between us. You cannot regret leaving Grignan in its present state. I can easily believe that the Coadjutor is anxious to finish his building, and have no doubt of the length of time which will elapse before M. de Carcassanne will bring his to a conclusion. You bear all this with wonderful patience—it is a subject on which I could fill pages. I have written to M. de La Garde

* He was the natural son of the Duke de Longueville, who was killed at the passage of the Rhine, 1672.

to thank him for the true and tender friendship he bears you. There is no fear of his changing; no one can be inconstant either to you or to Paulina, for whom he seems to have also a real affection.

Do not be uneasy concerning my health, it is very good—pity me only for not being near my dear daughter, whose company afforded pleasure and occupation, and without whom life is a vacuum. Present compliments from me to the Archbishop of Aix, to see if he remembers me. I think that as the Duke of Vendome has settled the affair, you should not dispute any point. You must live together in peace and enjoy his good and lively conversation; any other line of conduct would only serve to amuse the Provencaux, and could not do you any good either with the Court or in the province. Madame de La Fayette entreats both the Archbishop and M. de Grignan to live together in the country like persons who have lived at Court, and who may meet again at Versailles. Present my kind love to the dear Count, and to the Coadjutor, and if you will embrace Paulina for me you will make her happy, for I am certain she adores you, as you cannot be loved in a less degree.

LETTER CCXCIV.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, November 10, 1688.

THE tender remembrance which you retain of Livry goes to my heart. I see in your affection for that dear spot, a proof of your love for me. The Chevalier certainly affronted us very much when he paid his last visit there, and in spite of all he had repeatedly written in praise of that sweet place, he evidently was insincere; for in fact he liked it not. Indeed the damps of the evening did not respect him as they ought to have done, therefore he had always a subject of complaint—but alas, my dear child, this is too certainly at an end, and for ever.

I fancy the Chevalier's health will permit him to go to Versailles—it will be fortunate for you and for your son who will soon return. Sleep in peace then, my daughter, and be no longer uneasy. Every thing succeeds according to your wishes, both for the safety and rising reputation of the Marquis. The Chevalier will have imparted to you all the agreeable things which Lord Mountague writes of him. You have now your wish, he is an old officer before the age of seventeen, a volunteer who has

been present at a seige of great importance, and also a captain of a company of light horse. The best part of the story is, that you procured him such fine recruits—without your assistance his regiment would have been frightful. Thus are you clever at every thing, and do not confine your talents to knowing perfectly how to manage a law-suit.

Poor St. Aubin is wasting so rapidly that his end is visibly near at hand. Mademoiselle de Grignan and I spent part of yesterday with him. I am going to day (after dinner) to Brevanes; the weather is beautiful. Madame de Coulanges has been wishing for me these six weeks, but I had Philisbourg to take. I shall stay there now a few days, receive your letters, write to you, and walk a little. It is in taking exercise that I shall give rest to my mind and body which has suffered a great deal both on your account and that of my grandson. I am in perfect health, have done every thing in the way of physick which you could desire. I only wish I could be certain that you are as well as myself, and that the air of Provence has not hurt you. Let me know your real situation, and whether so much anxiety, and such bad nights, have not made you very thin. Madame de La Fayette desires you to love Paulina*, declaring that she knows your daughter

* This request is not so extraordinary when made to a French mother who had a darling son, as it would be to an English mother.

Note of the Translator.

is amiable, and she joins with Madame de Lavardin in desiring you not to refuse a good offer when it comes—they both send their kindest love to you. The Marquis de Jarzè is recovering—I condemn him to live quietly at home—for what figure can a man make who has only his left arm, and who, when he holds the bridle of his horse, has nothing on the other side to defend him. I will not answer to what you say on the subject of writing. Can you suppose that I take less pleasure than you in conversing thus? In writing to you I rest myself of the fatigue which other letters occasion. I entreat M. de Grignan to be always as wise as at present, and the Coadjutor to finish his building. He assured me when he was here that nothing had a better effect for the honour of his house than to be making additions to it during a law-suit. To that I did not agree—but what really would have a bad effect, would be leaving the building unfinished.

LETTER CCXCV.

To the same.

Brevanes, Thursday evening, November 11, 1688.

I ARRIVED here yesterday evening, my dearest; this is an odd season to begin a country life, but I think it better to make use of these fleeting moments of fine weather, and enjoy a little exercise after having been confined a year at Paris, than not to move. I do not repent of having remained so long in town, because I had Philisbourg to take, and our child to release from all danger—that was business sufficient. I have now nothing to do but to thank the Almighty for the Marquis's health, and the restoration of your peace of mind. This I have chosen to do in this sweet spot, where I shall spend some days. I believe I carried the Chevalier ill luck by dint of wishing him health; for the moment my back was turned, he was able to dine at the Abbé Tétu's; it really gives me infinite pleasure. I know how much he wishes to go to Versailles, and being able to leave his room is the road to it. Madame de Coulanges is still more amiable than at Paris—she is quite a companion for the country. I know not where she acquired such a taste, which really seems natural to her. Do as you

please is the motto here, and it so happens that we chuse to walk a great deal, the weather being very fine—we read, we remain alone, we say our prayers when we please, and meet altogether when it is agreeable to us, and live well. I have indeed been only four and twenty hours here, but it is easy to judge by what I have already seen.

I expect to receive your letters to-morrow, yet it is not those I particularly wish for, but your answer to the letters which acquainted you with the taking of Philisbourg. I long to know your heart expanded with pleasure, and peace which had been banished so long, restored to your mind.

You are now at Lambesc, my dear child; how much this additional distance renews the pangs of our separation. If you had been a few hours ago romantically behind a palisade in these gardens, your modesty would have suffered from all Madame de Coulanges and I were saying in your praise. Adieu—I am going to purchase the Rules for a Christian Life, by M. Le Tourneux. I shall perhaps learn from it to be more submissive to the will of Providence.

LETTER CCXCVI.

To the same.

Brevanes, November 15, 1688.

I BEGIN this letter at Brevanes, but shall finish it at Paris, where Madame de Coulanges and I are going to dine. I am going to poor St. Aubin, who is so reduced that he cannot recover. I imagine you at Lambesc. M. de Grignan will have made his harangue. I desire to have it—the Archbishop of Aix will have taken his arm chair. I am always with you wherever you are; but as I am not a philosopher like Descartes, I cannot help discovering that my imagination alone is concerned, and feeling that you are really absent, are not you in the same case although a disciple of that great man.

Paris, five o'clock in the afternoon.

I DID not return to Brevanes, my dear Countess, with Madame de Coulanges. I found poor St. Aubin too near the great journey to another world. I put an end to all mine to attend to what I owe a person I have always loved. He was pleased at seeing me; he held my hand a long time between his, saying many religious and tender things which

made me weep exceedingly. This was an opportunity not to be neglected of seeing a man die with such perfect composure and a Christian like resignation, full of charity towards all men, and impatient to be united to his God. It is with such people we should learn at least to die, if with them we have not been fortunate enough to live.

I returned home and made my excuses to Madame de Coulanges, who with difficulty accepted them. The Chevalier went to Versailles yesterday. I am certain that you will tell me in your next of your great joy at the taking of Philisbourg, but my dear do not be less happy at the taking of Manheim, since your son was in greater danger there than at the other siege. You must rejoice also that he received a little confusion upon the thigh, after which he wrote me the enclosed letter. He is fortunate in having escaped so well. You and M. de Gliguan have great reason to be thankful, and Madame de Montchevreuil who has lost her son, and Madame de Nesle who has lost her husband, must envy you exceedingly.

November 17.

I MUST thank you most heartily for having taken the longest road to avoid those little rivulets which have swelled into rivers—do always thus—there is no sort of comparison between being moped

or being drowned. Was not Paulina in the litter with you? How did you like her little face over against you?

You omit telling me many particulars I wish to be informed of. You fancy perhaps that I shall write less; but no, my dearest, I shall not allow myself to be governed by your example in that particular. Your brother is at a wedding at Saint Brieux—it was only the presence of the Duke de Chaulnes which prevented the bridegroom from running away.

Monsieur de Bailly is just gone from hence—he stutters out a thousand civil things for you, and with so good a heart that you must be obliged to him.

LETTER CCXCVII.

To the same.

Paris, November 19, 1688.

I SHALL now continue the holy and tragical story of poor St. Aubin. On Wednesday he received the extreme unction. I went to him immediately with M. de Coulanges—we found him very ill, but perfectly in his senses, and with so little appearance of fear, that I could scarcely believe he was dying.

I found the two admirable priests with him, and resolved not to quit him any more. The *Miserere* was read; the sick man shewing his attention by his eyes and gestures. He had been able to make the proper responses to the extreme unction. At nine o'clock I was desired to retire, and he uttered the word adieu. Father Maret remained with him; at midnight he had a kind of fit, after which he fell into a dose which was only interrupted by the Father, who holding him in his arms still talked to him of his God. At length the priest received his last sigh, and passed the rest of the night praying for him and weeping devoutly.* I went to the house the next day, and saw the deceased who was very little altered, and did not inspire me with terror, nor indeed any of those who saw him. We went this morning to the mass that was said for the repose of his soul—it was performed at St. Jacques without any ceremony—from thence we went to the Convent where he was buried—it was a melancholy scene—the clergy in their canonicals, all the Nuns with their torches, singing the *Libera*, had a very sublime and moving effect. At length the corpse was placed in that deep grave from whence it can

* A strong proof if any were wanting, that the Catholic priests were actuated by the purest and most indefatigable zeal in the performance of the duties of their office.

Note of the Translator.

never return. He is no longer upon earth—time is nothing to him—he enjoys eternity. To say that such a ceremony could be witnessed without tears is impossible; but they were soft not painful ones. We saw the Prioress of the Convent, and after having acted my part as the niece of the good St. Aubin, I became again the mother of Madame de Griguan, and in that character I was so animated that Coulanges, who was listening to us, exclaimed ‘How well you talk—how charmingly you are matched.’ She said a thousand agreeable things of you, talked of your son—in short, I should never finish were I to tell you all the amiable Prioress said. None but angels can exceed the excellence of the inhabitants of this Convent.

I found the Chevalier at home last night, he was just returned from Versailles. He tells me that the Marquis’s contusion was the news of the day, and spoken of in the most agreeable manner. He was complimented by Madame de Maintenon who heard it from the Dauphin. Every body took a part in our joy, and what makes the pleasure perfect is, that the Dauphin is on the road and the Marquis also. If my dear child you do not sleep soundly after that, I know not what you would have. The Chevalier entertained me the whole evening with nothing but good news. I am forbidden to tell you a word more, except that I feel grateful to Providence for coming to your aid just at the time you were ready to hang

yourself, and I ready to consent to your doing so. Adieu my dearest, we expect great news from England, but it is not yet arrived.

LETTER CCXCVIII.

To the same.

Paris, November 30, 1688.

I BEGIN my letter this afternoon because I am going at nine o'clock in the evening to the service which is to be performed for poor St. Aubin—it is a respect which our Carmelites pay to him out of pure friendship. I shall see them to-morrow when your virtues will be celebrated as they often are—from thence I shall go to dine with Madame de La Fayette.

You give me a perfect idea of your eldest daughter; pray embrace her for me. I rejoice that she is happy. As for your son I allow you to love him exceedingly, of whom every body speaks well—we expect him this week. The Dauphin arrived on Sunday—the King met him in the Bois de Boulogne—the Dauphin alighted, and the King chose to do the same. The son embraced the father's knees, but the King raising him said, it is not thus I will be embraced; you deserve a different recep-

tion. They then affectionately hung upon each other—the Dauphin embraced all the party in the coach, and took the eighth place. The Chevalier will tell you more particulars. I have seen St. Herem ; he sends you compliments. He will reap great advantage from the reform in M. de La Rochefoucault's kitchen—the good fare which he partook of at his table destroyed him. I mentioned to you, I believe, that the heat and the gnats you complain of, prove that the same sun does not shine upon us. Last week we had the most severe frost, afterwards came a fall of snow, consequently yesterday it was impossible to walk or ride with safety. At present it rains torrents and we know not if there is a sun belonging to this world.

December 1.

BRIOLE has given us the copy of a letter which the Duke de Montausier wrote to the Dauphin after the taking of Philisbourg, with which I am delighted.

‘I do not,’ said he, ‘compliment your Royal Highness upon the taking of Philisbourg. You had an excellent army, bombs, cannon, and Vauban ; neither do I compliment you upon your valour ; it is a virtue hereditary in your family. But I rejoice with you that you proved yourself liberal, generous

and humane, praising and rewarding those who did well. Upon this I pay you my compliments.'

Every body admires the style of this letter worthy of M. de Montausier, and of a governor.

Friday, December 3.

I AM to inform you to-day that the King named yesterday seventy four Knights of the Order of the Blue Ribband,* of which I send you the list, he has done M. de Grignan the honour to place him among the number. You are desired (by persons much wiser than me) not to write any thing that can offend any of those who share this honour with you. The ceremony of the installation will be performed the first day of the new year. The time is but short; many will be dispensed from coming—perhaps your husband will be of the number. The Chevalier is going to Versailles to return the King thanks.

All the world has been here to pay their compliments to me. I am going out that I may only see in the evening the list of visitors. Nothing can equal the torrent of visits that is rushing into every house; but if there are many persons gratified and happy, there are also many discontented. I

could name you a hundred—but such is the world—I congratulate you sincerely as well as Monsieur de Grignan and the Coadjutor.

LETTER CCXCIX.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday December 8, 1688.

YOUR little rogue of a son after having told us to expect him yesterday, arrived like a giddy fellow the day before, at seven o'clock in the evening, and I was not at home. His uncle (the Chevalier) received and was delighted to see him, and I, when I returned, found him looking very well, and in great spirits—he embraced me in the prettiest manner five or six times. He wanted to kiss my hands, but I took possession of his head, and kissed him my own way. I wanted to see his contusion, but as it happens to be upon his left thigh, I did not think proper to make him take off his small cloaths. We chatted together a great deal—he adores your picture, and longs to see his dear mother, but, as a soldier, thinks himself obliged to conform to the strict discipline of his profession, and not propose being absent from his duty. I wish you had heard him treating his contusion as a mere

trifle, and how little it affected him when every body else was uneasy around him. By the bye, my dear daughter, if he had attended to your lessons and held himself upright, he was a dead man; but sitting on the parapet, and according to custom, lolling all in double, conversing with the Count de Guiche, he was saved. You never would have believed that it was so good a thing to sit in a crooked posture.

We converse with him continually, are delighted to have him, and only lament that you do not enjoy the same pleasure. The Coulanges came to see him yesterday—he has returned their visits, and has been to M. de Lamoignon. He talks, he knows how to answer, and is not the same creature he was. I have given him some hints of the manner in which he is to speak of the new Knights, as nothing else is talked of it is necessary to know what to say to avoid falling into discussions which might naturally arise—he has perfectly understood me. I told him that M. de Lamoignon who is accustomed to the clack of young Broglio, would not like a silent youth. The Marquis took the hint and spoke very well—he is really very amiable—we eat together—don't be uneasy about us. The Chevalier takes your son, and I M. du Plessis. I think his being preserved by his sword a fortunate augur. I assure you, my dearest, that if you were here we might go to Livry, for I am still as much mistress of that

place as formerly. I am highly entertained at the idea of your foolish woman who will not play at cards till the King of England has won a battle. She ought to be dressed like an Amazon till that time, instead of wearing purple and white as when I saw her. After all then Paulina is not perfect—so much the better—you will have the pleasure of new moulding her—manage her with gentleness. The desire of pleasing you will do more than all the scolding in the world. My pockets are filled with notes of compliment for you. The Abbé de Guenegaud begun this morning some civil speeches, but he stuttered so unmercifully, that I was obliged to say at last, my dear Abbé, for God's sake give it up, if you wish to have your compliment concluded before the installation. In short, my dear, you and all the Gignans are the only subject. I found (as you did) the month of November sufficiently long and full of events, but I confess *that* of October appeared dreadfully long and tiresome. Your son occupied the last month; you will not allow me to say he will return—well then I say here he is *in propria personæ*.

The Marquis of Grignan to his mother.

‘**I**F it is not him, it is his brother, or some one of his family.’* Here I am, my dear Madam, arrived at last, and be so good as to remark that I have paid visits (quite alone) to M. de Lamoignon, Madame de Coulanges, &c. Is not that worthy of a man who has been at three sieges? I drank coffee with Madame de Bagnols, and I slept at a bagnio (another action of a great man). You cannot imagine how happy I think myself in possessing such a beautiful regiment for which I am to thank you. I shall go to see it pass through Chalons—thus then I have a fine company, a good lieutenant, a good quartermaster, and as for the captain, although young, I will answer for him. Adieu my dear Madam, permit me to have the honour of kissing your hands most respectfully.

* See La Fontaine’s fable of *Le Loup & L’Agneau*.

LETTER CCC.

To the same.

Paris, December 10, 1688.

I SHALL not be able to answer any thing to-day, as your letters arrive so late. The Marquis is a little grown but not enough to boast of. His figure can never be like his father's—we must give up that hope—however he is very amiable. When you are here, my dearest, you give your son such excellent lessons that I have nothing to do but to admire you; but in your absence I take the liberty to teach him some of the arts of conversation which a man ought not to be ignorant of. I shew him the absurdity of appearing surprised at certain pieces of news which are often the subject of discussion. I am a pretty good judge of these important trifles. I preach attention to him, and a quick comprehension to be able to answer properly. This skill is of great importance in the world. I talk to him of the wonderful instances of presence of mind which Dangeau was relating to us the other day—books are my next subject. I tell him it is laziness of mind that deprives a man of all taste for books of instruction, and even for novels. As we have this subject much at heart we return to it often. The

Chevalier is more useful to the young man than you can imagine, for he paints in the strongest terms the advantages of honour and reputation. He also manages all his affairs—he enters into every particular, and insists upon your son taking care of his money, keeping accòmpts, and avoiding needless expences. It is thus that he teaches him order and economy, and tries to prevent his adopting the airs of a man of high quality, and boasting of being indifferent and ignorant of his own affairs, which would most certainly lead to all sorts of injustice, and at last to utter ruin. Judge if you can be too much obliged to the friend who wishes to give your son such principles. I find more real greatness in that sort of education than in any other.

Did you really imagine that Paulina was perfect. She is not gentle you say to her family and attendants. There are many persons much admired and respected, who once had that defect. I think you may easily cure her of it, but of all things avoid using yourself to scolding and humbling her.

Now for an authentic peice of news. Madame de Brinon, the life of St. Cyr, * the intimate friend of Madame de Maintenon, is no longer in that Convent—she quitted it and all her honours four days ago. She is now at the Hotel de Guise, and does

* A Convent founded by Madame de Maintenon.

not appear to be upon bad terms with Madame de Maintenon who sends every day to enquire the state of her health. This adds to the general curiosity, to know the cause of her removal.

Good God, my dear child, how very silly your Provence women are, both alive and dead. I am quite shocked at the head dress* you mention—what profanation—it resembles the Pagans. Unless you can promise me that the undertaker and the milliner will not be sent for at the same time, I shall be afraid to die in Provence—oh fy, fy.

Nothing can go on worse than the affairs in England, and your fine lady is likely not to play at cards this long time. I will send you Bigorre's Gazette.

M. de Chaulnes writes with much humour; he was nearly lost going from Brest to Belle Isle—he is now resting himself at Rennes.

The King of England is returned to London abandoned by those he most depended upon. Had he gone where he first intended, he would have fallen into the hands of the Prince of Orange. He has been persuaded to promise that a free Parliament shall assemble next month, which it is said will be his complete ruin. His son-in-law, the Prince of Denmark, and his daughter, Anne, (who is also

* It was the custom in Provence to bury the dead with the face uncovered, and those who wore ribbands during their lives preserved the fashion after their death.

another Tullia, and who I call the young lady of Denmark) are gone to meet that scourge, the Prince of Orange. It is said that the little Prince is not at Portsmouth, where he was supposed to be besieged—his escape will make a novel some day. Every body is convinced the King will fly also—thus will the Prince of Orange be master and protector, and very soon something worse if a miracle does not happen—this was the news of to-day.

LETTER CCCI.

To the same.

Paris, December 15, 1688.

HERE I am fixed by the corner of my fire, a little table before me, labouring these two hours in writing my letters to Brittany. One I have written to my son which I send to M. de Chaulnes that he may see the news, as he is at Rennes; and now I am going to rest and refresh myself by writing to my dear daughter. It is really a rest to write to you; the more so as our little hero will soon return from Versailles, and take up the pen whenever I please, to tell you all he has done at Court, as same acquainted you with what was done at Philisbourg and Manheim.

I approve exceedingly of the answer that you

wanted the Dauphin to send to M. de Montausier; it would have been worthy of a real hero. A medal has been cast in which the enemies are supposed to speak—it represents a young eagle armed with thunder, and this line from Horace :

Cœlo tonantem credidimus Jovem.

As for poor St. Aubin's mourning I have nothing to say in respect to what you have done, except that you need not have taken it at so great a distance, and where he was so little known. You are too good, and M. de Grignan also. Do not fail to quit your mourning on New Year's day—that is the time the Princess of Conti has fixed for that of Mademoiselle de Sanzie. M. de La Trousse will do the same.

I see that taking the sacrament is very frequent in Provence—to my shame be it spoken, I have neglected the Conception of the Holy Virgin, to keep my devotion for the Nativity of her Son, although certainly one cannot prepare for it too much. Here is the Marquis just returned from Court, and I give him the pen.

The Marquis de Grignan to his mother.

I AM just returned from Versailles, my dear Madam, where I went last Sunday. I waited first upon the Marshal des Loges to desire him to present me to the King. He promised me to do it, and desired me to meet him at Madame de Maintenon's door, that I might bow to his Majesty as he came out. This I did, and the King stopped and gave me a nod and a smile. The next day I paid my respects to the Dauphin, the Dauphiness, the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, and the Princes of the Blood, at their own apartments, and was every where well received.

I dined with Madame d'Armagnacs, who loaded me with kindness, and desired her kindest compliments to you. From thence I went to M. de Montausiers, where I remained till the hour of the play. It was *Andromaque*,* which was quite new to me. Judge, my dear Madam, how I was delighted. At night I attended the supper of the Royal Family. The next day, which was yesterday, I attended the levee, and spent the rest of the morning at the public offices, and at M. Charpentier. I dined at M. de Montausiers. After dinner I went to see

* The Distrest Mother.

Madame d'Armagne, and from thence to the play to see Sertorius; and the rest of the evening I spent as before. This morning I went to the different levees, after which M. de La Trousse took me to M. de Louvois, who desired me to attend to my regiment. I told him it was completed, and M. de La Trousse added that it was a very fine one. This, my dear Madam, is an exact account of what past at Versailles. Permit me while gazing upon your picture to lament that I cannot throw myself at the feet of the dear original, to kiss her two hands and aspire perhaps to one of her cheeks.

LETTER CCCII.

To the same.

Paris, December 20, 1688.

IS it possible, my dear child, that you think I write so well? my pen gallops very fast, but if you are pleased I ask no more. M. de Grignan need not come. The King will both give and send him the Blue Ribband and the Cross. If those that are absent must be dubbed, it will be required of the Archbishop of Aix to receive his dear nephew, otherwise it will be done here the first time you come—your husband may wear the Ribband in the mean time,

Madame de Broglio thinks she is going to live with you, because she is going to Languedoc. We do not yet know La Trousse's destiny, but are not uneasy about it. He will be the most elegant of the new Knights. Many satirical verses and songs have appeared against them. I refuse to listen—but these lines the Countess de Fiesque was repeating aloud the other day at Mademoiselle's.

Le Roi dont la bonté le met a mille épreuves
 Pour soulager les Chevaliers nouveaux
 En a dispensé vingt de porter des manteaux
 Et trente de faire leurs preuves.*

This is droll and pretty fair. If M. de Grignan waits to be at the installation I should wish to be present to be a witness of the excellent figure he would make there.

The King of England continues to be betrayed by his own officers. He has no friend but M. de Lauzun, † who never quits him. A new Parliament will be called—it is hoped that there will be a third party who will not chose the Prince of Orange:

* The King whose good nature subjects him to difficulties,
 To ease the new Knights,
 Has allowed twenty not to wear their cloaks,
 And thirty not to prove their nobility.

† Who had been lately released from his imprisonment at Figuerol.

The little Prince of Wales is so far safe at Portsmouth. What do you say to this English nation?

We cannot accustom ourselves to not seeing you enter the room. I say we, because your son feels your absence very sensibly. I repeat to him for ever the necessity of profiting by the advice and example of such an uncle as the Chevalier—we both talk to him a great deal. There are still many little things he has to learn to enable him to shine in conversation and company. When he falls into fits of absence and makes silly questions, he reminds me of the cat metamorphosed into a woman who escaped when she saw a mouse to run after it; thus the Marquis, who appears a man, shews sometimes that he is a child; for in fact he is only at the proper age for a college. He is really very amiable, and I often start up and embrace him, and tell him it is on your account.

We send you some of Deshouliere's poetry which we think you will admire. Madame de St. Geran is brought to bed of a daughter—it was hardly worth while to begin so late for that.

LETTER CCCIII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday December 24, 1688.

THE Marquis has been alone to Versailles, and behaved very well. He dined with the Duke du Maine at Monsieur de Montausier's—supped at Madame d'Armagnacs'—paid his court at the levees—in short, he is now ushered into the world, and succeeds very well—he is quite the fashion—never were more fortunate beginnings. I should never finish if I mentioned all those who spoke well of him. I cannot comfort myself that you are deprived of the pleasure of seeing and embracing him as I do every day.

But does it not seem while I am talking of these trifles that I have nothing else to tell you—but listen I pray you to this little piece of news scarce worth mentioning. The Queen of England, and the Prince of Wales, with only his nurse, and a servant, will be here in a few days. The King has ordered his carriages to meet them on the road from Calais, where that Queen arrived Tuesday last the 21st, escorted by Monsieur de Lauzun. This is what M. Courtin told us when he returned from Versailles. You heard that six weeks ago M. de Lau-

zun resolved to go to England—he could not make a better use of his leisure. He never has quitted the King of England, although all his own people betrayed and abandoned him. On Sunday last, the 19th, the King having formed his plan, went to bed with the Queen as usual; sent away the few attendants that still remained, and an hour after got up to order a valet de chambre to let in a man who was waiting in the anti chamber, which person was M. de Lauzun. The King said ‘To you I entrust the care of the Queen and my son. You must hazard every thing and conduct them to France.’ M. de Lauzun thanked him as you may imagine for such a proof of his confidence; but he desired to take with him a gentleman from Avignon, named St. Victor, who is well known as a man of great merit and courage. St. Victor took the little Prince (who was said to be at Portsmouth, but who was hid in the palace) and wrapt him in his cloak. M. de Lauzun led the Queen. You may imagine the melancholy farewell that passed between the King and Queen. She was attended by two of her women—they went into the street to take a hired carriage, afterwards embarked in a small boat, and coasted the river. A violent storm arose, and they knew not what would become of them—at length they entered a yatch. M. de Lauzun standing by the master of the vessel resolved if he was a traitor to throw him into the sea; but as the man thought

he had only common passengers on board, (which happened to him frequently) he quietly sailed through fifty Dutch vessels, who took no notice of so small a bark. Thus protected by Heaven, and sheltered by their insignificance, they arrived happily at Calais, where the Duke of Charost received the Queen with all the respect imaginable. A courier arrived yesterday at noon to acquaint the King with all these particulars, and at the same time to order the carriages to be sent to meet the Queen of England, and take her to Vincennes, which is furnishing for her. It is said the King will go to meet her himself. This is the first volume of the novel—you shall soon hear the sequel. We have just been assured that to finish the adventure, M. de Lauzun after having placed the Queen and Prince safely in the hands of M. de Charost, chose to return to England with St. Victor, to share the cruel and miserable fate of the poor King. I admire the star which presides over Lauzun's life and which still chuses to make his name famous when it seemed to be quite sunk in oblivion—he carried a thousand pistoles to the King of England. His returning is certainly a great and bold action, as according to all appearances he must perish either with the King, or in consequence of the rage the English will feel at his having helped him to escape. I leave you to reflect upon this novel, and embrace you with uncommon affection.

LETTER CCCIV.

To the same.

Paris, December 27, 1688:

YOU are to know that our young Captain is on [the road to Chalons to see the fine regiment that you have raised for him. M. du Plessis is with him, and feels most sensibly the many proofs he receives of your esteem and confidence. He is devoted to you and to your son, and when I see him with his cocked hat and black cravat, he reminds me of the blacksmith who became a painter from love, since, it is a passion for the interests of your house that has made a warrior of M. du Plessis. In a word, he has courage and a hundred virtues.

Nothing is talked of but the Queen of England—she has desired to remain a little while at Boulogne, till she hears from her husband who has escaped from England, although nobody knows where he is. Our King has sent the English Queen three carriages, with ten horses, litters, pages, footmen, guards, &c. M. de Lauzun must be proud of the issue of this adventure*—he has evinced genius,

* Monsieur de Lauzun had not been received at Court since his imprisonment.

judgment, and courage, throughout the whole affair, and has found that the best road to Versailles was by London—such events are made only for him. The Princess* is quite in a rage to find that the King is pleased with Lauzun, and that he will again be received at Court.

The installation will take place at the chapel of Versailles. It will begin Friday, at Vespers, and be continued New Year's day in the morning. The King excuses the Knights from taking the sacrament at the ceremony. His Majesty will not wear his cloak, only the collar of the order. The cloaks are borrowed, therefore it is true that many Knights are dispensed from wearing them. The King is much pleased with the manner in which the Prince of Moraco has consented to receive the order of the garter, and has said so aloud which makes those who refused, look very foolish. In all probability the courier that carries the Blue Ribband to Monaco, will also carry M. de Grignan's. I think he is in the situation of those hounds to whom the hunters say now go, and then all at once stop. This is a noble comparison. I fear it will occasion a quarrel between me and that touchy genius—he will say I treat him like a dog.

* Mademoiselle who married Lauzun privately was extremely ill treated by him, and hated him at that time as much as she had once loved him. See 'Mémoires de Montpensier.

Wednesday, December 29.

MADAME DE COULANGES, who I saw this morning, told me she received your letter and would shew it me to-night at the Abbé Tegu's—thus are you acquitted of this business. I pity you very much since you are obliged to answer a hundred persons who write to you. It is a cruel French fashion—but what will you say to those of England, where fashion and manners are of a much worse description. M. de Lamoignon writes to the Chevalier that King James is arrived at Boulogne—others say he is a prisoner in England—others that he perished in a dreadful storm—you may chuse which to believe. The Queen will not stir till she hears news of her husband—she weeps and prays incessantly. Our King was very uneasy concerning his Britannic Majesty's fate. This is a great scene, and we are attentively watching the decree of the Gods.

Et nous voulons apprendre
Ce qu'ils ont ordonné du beau pere & du gendre.*

I resume my pen, am just returned from the Chevalier's room. I never remember such a day.

* And we wish to learn

What the fates will decide for the father and son-in-law.

From Corneille's Tragedy of Polyucte.

We have five different accounts of King James, and all from good authorities. He is at Calais, at Brest, besides what I mentioned before. All this makes such a confused story that we know not what to believe. Servants are going and coming incessantly with messages upon the subject. I must bid you adieu my dear child, without sending you any positive account, except it be of my friendship which is such as your merit deserves, and my natural inclination prompts me to feel, and which leads me on without any reserve in the career of affection.

LETTER CCCV.

To the same.

Paris, December 31, 1688.

PER tornar dunque al nostro proposito—I shall now tell you, my daughter, that all the uncertainties of yesterday which seemed to terminate in the idea that the King was at Calais, are now changed into an absolute belief that he is arrested in England, and if that misfortune has not happened to him, he must have perished at sea during the storm, since he was to effect his escape and embark a few hours after the Queen. This is the public opinion, and thus we finish this year and begin 1689, con-

erning which there are so many predictions—great and wonderful are the events announced,* but they are marked out by the hand of Providence, as well as all our actions, all our journies. We must submit to what is to happen, and learn to look forward with resignation.

We hear that troops are going to be sent to Brittany with Monsieur de Moment, who is to command under M. de Chaulnes—there will be camps in the provinces. When you look at the map you will not wonder at the precautions our Government takes. Madame de Berillon is very uneasy at her husband's situation,† though it is said he is perfectly safe, although the King's Chapel has been destroyed as well as that which belonged to the Ambassador. Time will clear up all things. The Prince of Orange is supposed to be in London—this is the subject of all conversations at present. The Queen of England is still in a Convent at Boulogne, lamenting that she cannot see her husband whom she passionately loves.

* The French prophets did not foresee that in 1789 there would be a revolution in France as fatal to that country as the revolution in England in 1689 was advantageous to the interests of that happy island.

Note of the Translator.

† M. de Barillon was Ambassador from France to England.

Madame de Brinon is completely forgotten—much is said of Racine's new play, called Esther—it is to be performed at St. Cyr by the young ladies. The carnival does not promise to be very gay. Here is Corbinelli who wears himself out in reasoning upon the present singular events. Adieu my dearest, I embrace you a thousand times, and hope the year 89 will bring you all happiness.

LETTER CCCVI.

To the same.

Paris, January 3, 1689.

THE installation of your brother Knights took place on New Year's day at Versailles. Coulanges is returned—he told me the ceremony began on the Friday. Marshal Bellefonds made a very ridiculous figure, having out of modesty, and a sort of indifference, neglected to put ribbands to the knees of his small cloaths, which made an absolute nakedness. The whole party were magnificent. M. de La Trousse shone particularly, but there was something deranged in his wig which occasioned the side of it getting behind, and uncovered one cheek—he kept pulling his wig which obstinately resisted, and it proved a very embarrassing

business. On the same line with him, M. de Montchevreuil, and M. de Villars, so entangled themselves together with their swords, ribbands, and finery, that no hand of man could separate them. It was like the arms of Roger,* the more the matter was attempted the more they were entangled. In a word, the whole business of bows and ceremonies was stopped by this unfortunate adhesion—they were obliged to use force, and the parties were fairly torn asunder. But what entirely disconcerted the gravity of the spectators was the carelessness of the good Marshal d'Hocquincourt, whose cloaths were made so much in the style of the Provençaux's and the Bretons, that the lower part of his dress being less roomy than usual, his shirt refused to remain quietly in it, though much pressed so to do by the Marshal, who discovering what had happened, tried continually to force it into his breeches, but without success. This diverted the Dauphiness so much that she could not avoid laughing. The King found it difficult to preserve his gravity, and never did the history of the Order afford such an adventure—it really was completely ridiculous. Certainly, my dear child, if my son-in-law had been present at the ceremony, I should have attended also. There were many places vacant as it was generally thought that the crowd would be immense,

* See the Ariosto.

many persons kept away. The next day nothing was seen at Court but blue ribbands—the well made men, and the young ones, wore them over their coats; the others appeared with the ribband under. M. de Grignan may chuse, since no shape is finer than his.

The King of England it is said has been taken in a huntsman's dress, and in the act of escaping; he is now confined at the Palace of Whitehall. The Prince of Orange remains at St. James's, which is on the other side of the Park—the Parliament is to meet—God send a favourable issue. The poor Queen will be here on Wednesday; she comes to St. Germain's to be nearer our King, and more at hand to receive the favours he means to confer upon her. I am assured that Monsieur de Lauzun has been three quarters of an hour with the King; if this continues you may judge that he will soon be in favour again.

January 5.

I TOOK the Marquis yesterday to pay some visits with me. We began by M. de La Trousse, who had the complaisance to put on the dress he wore at the installation. It is extremely becoming to persons who are well made. It resembles that of a Page, and is very handsome. I no longer wonder that

Madame de Cleves * fell in love with M. de Nemours, when he shewed his fine legs. As for the mantle it has all the magnificence of royalty, and cost La Trousse a hundred pistoles, for he was obliged to buy it. After having seen this fine masquerade I took your son to visit all the ladies in that neighbourhood—soon he will be able to go alone.

You will learn by the news of to-day that King James has escaped from London, probably by the Prince of Orange's consent. Wise people make their reflections and ask whether it is advantageous to that King to be in France. Some say yes, for he will be safe and not obliged to give up his wife and son, or be beheaded. Others say no, for he leaves the Prince of Orange Protector of the Kingdom, and adored, since he has attained that title without cruelty or bloodshed. One thing is certain war will be declared against us the very first. If we could make peace with Italy and Germany we might more particularly attend to the war against England and Holland. You see how my pen runs away with me upon this occasion; but you may believe our minds and conversations are full of nothing but these great events. Adieu my dear child, do not take example by this letter—take care of your health and particularly of your lungs.

* See the charming novel called '*La Princesse de Cleves*,' written by Madame de La Fayette.

LETTER CCCVII.

To the same.

Paris, January 7, 1689.

I AM now in the Chevalier's chamber; he has had some pain in his right hand in the night, and still suffers. He had supped with me at M. de Lamoignons, and been very chearful. It is your misfortune and his own that he is prevented going to Versailles, where he would be so useful to his nephew. He has a degree of patience and resignation which Corbinelli boasts of having taught him in a masterly style. We seldom see this Corbinelli; all his friends seize upon him, and I let him go out of kindness; for we live abstemiously; sometimes he comes at night, and partakes of a collation with us—he is always very good company. You insist then on my writing to Madame de Solre; but good God what an undertaking. I must adopt a formal style, a thing most dreadful to me. Coulanges told me a droll story the other day of her husband. The Count de Solre went to Chavris,* followed by two porters, carrying two heavy trunks which they

* Genealogist to the King.

placed upon the ground. He took out of the first an immense bundle of papers, and said, throwing them upon the table, 'there, Sir, are the titles of thirty seven Knights of the Golden Fleece belonging to my family.' Poor Chauvri excessively provoked at the confusion he had made, said, 'Sir, here are more than we want—you have mixed all my papers—I shall never be able to find the proofs of nobility of two or three persons whose names do not resemble yours;' for Heaven's sake be satisfied—but the other without attending to what he said, or noticing his distress, took out another large packet and said, 'Sir, here is the contract of marriage between one of my grandfathers and Sabina of Bavaria.' 'Good God Sir,' said Chauvri, 'I repeat to you here is more than enough.' In spite of this Solre, with the assistance of a servant, unfolded an immense roll of parchment, and spread it all over the room, proving that he descended by two different branches from two crowned heads; poor Chauvri exclaiming all the time, 'Sir, you have ruined me, I shall never find my papers, you do me irreparable mischief. Coulanges acted this scene so inimitably, that flat as it may appear upon paper, it amused us exceedingly. Tell me, I entreat you, when you wish me to write to this woman allied to so many Golden Fleeces.

If I was with you I should be happy if you were to speak to me of your affairs in which I am so much

interested. Do not give your Provencaux the pleasure of making a breach between you and your Archbishop, and Intendant. You would make them too happy—I thought I discovered, when at Lambesc, the delight they took in fomenting quarrels and mischief to make themselves necessary. Fye upon these provincial manners—banish them for ever.

January 10.

THE Abbé Tétu is still miserable for want of sleep; the physicians will not answer for his head. He feels his situation which is an additional calamity. He only exists by opium—he tries to amuse himself by going to public places. We want to send him to see the Royal Family of England—Can there be a more interesting sight, more likely to attract attention and divert his thoughts from his own situation? As for the King's escape it is evident that the Prince of Orange winked at it. The King was conveyed to Exeter according to his own desire. He was well guarded in the front of the house, but the back doors were left open—the Prince had no intention of hurting his father-in-law. He is in London quietly seated in his place without however taking the name of King, only wishing to re-establish a religion which he thinks the best, and supporting the laws of the country without spilling a drop of blood. This is the exact reverse of what

he was represented to be; it is the two sides of the medal. In the mean time our Sovereign acts towards their Britannic Majesties in a manner quite divine; for is it not imitating the Supreme Being to protect the unfortunate driven from their country betrayed and abandoned. The King's great soul enjoys this noble action. He went to meet the Queen of England with all his household, near a hundred coaches and six; when he perceived the carriage in which the little Prince was, he alighted, and embraced the child tenderly, then hastened to meet the Queen, whom he saluted and presented to all the Royal Family. He then conducted her to St Germain, where she is attended with regal state. She found a wardrobe furnished with every article of dress, and a magnificent casket containing six thousand Louis d'Ors. The next day the Court was occupied with the reception of King James—every possible respect was paid him by our King, and six thousand Louis d'Ors placed upon his table. He appears old and fatigued. The Queen is thin, her eyes spoilt with weeping, but handsome and black; a fine skin but pale; a large mouth with good teeth—with all this a great deal of cleverness; altogether she is a pleasing woman. Here is matter for public conversation which will not soon be exhausted. Monsieur de Lauzun did not return to England; he has apartments at Versailles, and is very happy. He has written to Mademoiselle to

ask permission to visit her, but she is still enraged against him. I have been performing a master piece of civility. I have visited Madame de Ricouart who is lately returned well pleased at being a widow. You need but give me your intimacies to finish as you used to do your novels. I thank dear Paulina for her letter. I am sure her little figure would please me. She cannot find then any other name for me but Madam; that is really a serious thing. Adieu my dearest, preserve your health for my sake.

LETTER CCCVIII.

To the same.

Paris, January 14, 1689.

I AM now, my dear child, sitting after my dinner in the Chevalier's apartment. He has many flying pains—the confinement makes him vapourish and fretful. I lament this much, knowing better than any body the consequences of his not being able to move. The cold is excessive; our thermometer is at the lowest point. Our river is frozen, it snows, it freezes, and thaws all at the same time. It is impossible to stand in the streets. I confine myself to the house and the Chevalier's chamber—if you were not a fortnight answering my letters, I

would desire you to ask him if I am troublesome, but as I am in a hurry to be informed, I make him the question myself, and he says he likes my company—this excessive cold contributes to his ills.

Monsieur de Gobelin is still at St. Cyr. Madame de Brinon is at Maubuisson, a situation of which she will soon be tired—poor woman, she cannot remain long in any place; has already changed convents two or three times; her great genius does not preserve her from that fault. Madame de Maintenon is much occupied in making her young favourites at St. Cyr act Racine's Esther. It will no doubt be a charming performance—she has been to see the Queen of England, who having made her wait a moment, said she was extremely sorry to lose any of the time in which she could enjoy her company and conversation. This Queen pleases every body; she said to the King seeing him embrace her son, 'I had envied my child's happiness in not feeling his misfortunes; but now I pity him since he is insensible to your Majesty's kindness.' Every thing she says is sensible and proper—we cannot say as much of her husband—he has personal courage, but a very common understanding; relating every thing that past in England with a degree of insensibility, which inspires his hearers with the same for him. He is a good sort of a man, and takes a share in all the pleasures of Versailles. The Dauphiness will not visit the Queen—she insists upon having the

right hand and an arm chair, a thing without a precedent. She will therefore remain in bed, and the Queen of England will visit her there. Thus is that ceremonial settled.

It is not certain that Marshal Schomberg holds the Prince of Orange's place in Holland. We hear more lies than usual this year. M. de Lauzun's star begins to grow pale—he has no apartments at Versailles, nor permission to see the King in private as formerly. Fame has robbed him of the noble and romantic part of his adventure in England, and it is become a common event—such is the world and such the present times.

Wednesday night.

I HAVE just received your letter—the severe weather which freezes your Rhone and Durance, makes a looking glass of our Seine. It has petrified us, and so completely spoilt the streets that I have been a week without going out, except to pay visits with Madame de Chaulnes, at the expence of her horses—mine could not stand upon their legs, therefore I avoided asking them to move. I have been much with the Chevalier; he is in better health, and intends going to Versailles after the journey to Marli.

Your son is much occupied with preparations for a masquerade that is to take place next Sunday at

the Palais Royal. The Duke de Chartres* has sent him an invitation—you know what an important affair that is.

LETTER CCCIX.

To the same.

Paris, January 24, 1689.

AT length then your Durance has permitted our letters to pass—so furious is its course that the ice must be uncommonly clever to have been able to stop it. We have had dreadful weather, a most severe frost, but I have not had one cold, and only kept the Chevalier's chamber instead of my own, and to adopt Madame de Coulanges's style, it would seem that he alone in the whole world suffered from cold, and deserved compassion. We have now a thaw, and still I am quite well. I must tell you a little of Madame de Coulanges's wit which diverted me much. M. de Barillon is delighted to find himself with his old friends, and often visits her and Madame de La Fayette. The other day he said to the former, 'How charm-

* Son to the Duke of Orleans and afterwards the famous Regent of France during the minority of Louis XV.

ing, my dear Madam, your house is, I shall come to you frequently in the evenings when I am tired of my family circle.' 'Sir,' answered Madame de Coulanges, 'I expect you to-morrow.' This stroke was as rapid as an arrow from a bow, and every body laughed who heard it.

Your son was yesterday at the Duke de Chartre's ball, he will tell you all his successes—you must not however depend upon his reading much—he owned to me yesterday that he had no taste for it at present. His youth may be said to make so much noise in his ears, that he cannot attend to any thing else. I believe the Chevalier and I have said every thing that can be said on the subject, but it is needless to fatigue and torment him. The time will come, my dear child, when he will attend to us. It is impossible that with so much cleverness and good sense (and loving his profession as he does) that he should not be curious to know what all the great warriors have atchieved, and to read of Cæsar at the head of his Commentaries. You must have a little patience and not worry yourself upon the subject—he would be too perfect if he loved reading.

You astonish me by what you say of Paulina—oh my daughter keep her with you, and do not believe that a Convent can repair the defect of any education, whether on the subject of religion (of which our good sisters, the Nuns, are often very ignorant) or on many other things. You will succeed much

better at home when you have time to attend to her. You must make her read good books, and converse with her. Monsieur de La Garde will assist you, and I am convinced those attentions will be far more useful than a Convent.

I really believe that the King and Queen of England are happier here than they were in their own perfidious kingdom. King James calls M. de Lauzun his Governor, but if so, he certainly governs no other person, for he is very far from being in favour. Their Majesties of England have refused to accept of more than fifty thousand francs. They do not chuse to live like Kings—many of the English nobility have joined them, otherwise they would retrench still more. In a word, they mean to go on in a way that may last a long time. Their adventures at first reminded me of my dear old romances—only love scenes were wanting to make the resemblance complete.

I am occupied in finishing your compliments of thanks, as I used formerly to finish your books, and your affection for your dogs which often did not last to the end of their lives.

I send by La Chau, who is going to Provence, a little Croix du St. Esprit * for M. de Grignan—it is to ornament his coat when he wears his Blue Rib-

* The order of the Holy Ghost represented by a dove.

band. I entreat you, my dear Count, to accept of this small present—it is to comfort you for the affront my daughter sometimes puts upon you, in naming me instead of you. My gifts are poor indeed. A ribband, a sash, a cross, mere trifles; but such presents must be expected from those who have retained nothing. I have given every thing I possessed, and considered when I did so, all the chances and consequences. No fears however could stagger me—I said if I am slighted or ruined, Heaven will make such a shocking instance of ingratitude instrumental to my salvation, by leading me to seek retirement and religion. In this idea I never repented of what I did. Your affection makes my life happy, but alas my dear child, you are sometimes too far from me, and I feel most sensibly the separation.

LETTER CCCX.

To the same.

Paris, January 28, 1689.

THE play of Esther has been already performed at St. Cyr. The King thinks it admirable, and it drew tears from the eyes of the great Condé. Racine has not wrote any thing more sublime, or more affecting. There is a prayer which Esther offers up for Assuerus, which is divine. I could not reconcile myself to the idea of a young girl acting the part of the King; but I am assured that she does it very well. Madame de Caylus * performs the part of Esther, and excels La Champmele.† I am writing in the Chevalier's apartment—he is in his gouty chair, striking the ground with his foot. I ask him what news he can tell me that can be depended upon—he answers ‘God is God, my dear Madam, I know no more.’ I have a great mind to say as little, and leave you to digest that great truth

* Niece to Madame de Maintenon.

† An actress of great celebrity.

Madame de Coulanges to Madame de Sévigné.

MADAME DE SEVIGNE will never allow me to write to you, my dear Madam, she cannot imagine that you employ my thoughts one moment. I never saw such a woman in my life. In the mean time I give you notice that if you intend to pay your Court here, you must ask to see Esther performed; you have heard of this famous play—all clever persons are charmed with it, and you would enjoy it more than any body. It is a mere trifle to come from Grignan to Versailles, and I should meet you there with infinite pleasure. It is impossible to wish more to see you than I do. I must not conclude this compliment without embracing M. de Grignan—it is a charter which I will not give up.

The poor Abbè Tètu is still devoured with vapours, and I have the shame of doing my best to cure him without success. M. de Coulanges says he cannot have the honour of writing to you, because he has a violent pain in his foot which he thinks is the gout—he screams like a madman, but it is merely to take off the Chevalier de Grignan.

LETTER CCCXI.

To the same.

Paris, January 31, 1689.

YES, indeed, my dear child, I do look like a person who has been uneasy at your sore throat, and I cannot express to you how much your letter of the 24th, which acquainted me with your recovery, gave ease to my mind. I am now as easy as I can be in your absence, but my imagination is cruel and often takes advantage of my weakness.

Madame de Chaulnes has seen the Queen of England, and likes her much—the little Prince was in a tawdry dress, but is handsome and lively—infancy is the happy age of children. History, which the great events in England tempts us to read again, is full of nothing but the perfidiousness of the people. The Prince of Orange is not quite at his ease in London. There are three parties, that of the King and the clergy which is small, that of the Prince which is very strong, and the third consists of republicans and nonconformists. All Ireland is upon the King's side—he would have done wisely had he taken refuge there.

All the Court is charmed with Esther. Madame

de Meramion,* and eight Jesuits, of which Father Gerard was one, honoured the last representation with their presence. In a word, it is looked upon as Racine's master-piece. If I were a devotee I should aspire to seeing this play. The Princess of Conti ventured to praise the opera the other day, but she was silenced by being accused of liking love scenes which are quite out of repute at Court.

Wednesday, February 2.

IT is this day in all probability that M. de Grignan will be admitted to the Chapter. I have no doubt but the courier will set off to-morrow to carry the Prince of Monaco and you—your blue ribbands—the whole delay was occasioned by your certificates of life, and manners, not arriving in time. You do Marie de Rabutin de Chantal † too much honour in abiding by her opinion—but do you know that if Jeane Fremiot ‡ was not in Heaven she would scold you very much. Let me tell you she had three Presidents amongst her ancestors. Oh oh, who do you take us for? She was a Berbisè by her mother's side. When people have had law-suits they should be careful of what they say.

* A celebrated devotee.

† Madame de Sevigne's maiden name.

‡ Grandmother to Madame de Sevigne.

The Queen of England seems very much the sort of character to have enjoyed much more (had Providence allowed it) reigning over the noble kingdom of England where she had a splendid court, than being at St. Germain, although loaded with honours and favours by our heroic King ; as for her husband, he seems happy in France, which indeed is probably the reason of its being his fate to remain there. I embrace my dear Count and Countess, because I am obliged to go to Vespers and to hear a sermon.

LETTER CCCXII.

To the same.

Paris, February 7, 1689.

I WENT yesterday, after closing my letter to see M. de Pomponne ; he was just returned from St. Cyr—you heard that he had been named by Madame de Maintenon, and received an order from the King to attend the representation of Esther the next day. M. de Pomponne was really charmed with it. Racine has exceeded his former works. He loves his God as he loved his mistresses ; that is with enthusiasm. He is as great upon holy subjects, as upon profane ones. The scripture is strictly attended to in this

piece—every thing is sublime, and treated with proper dignity. You have read the Chevalier's account of it; his praises and his tears prove it to be stirring. The King and Queen of England saw Esther on Saturday—would to Heaven my dear child that you could see it also.

You talk to me of Brittany and of the reasons which ought to make me resolve upon going there. It is certain that M. de Chaulnes is continually writing to entreat me to accompany his lady, who goes in Lent. He promises to finish all my affairs for me, and to bring me back after the Assembly of States are over—consequently I could not take my time better. I really have some business in that part of the world with the Abbé Charier. Let me know your opinion. After that journey, so necessary to my affairs, I shall be wholly at your disposal, as indeed I now am from my heart, and from natural inclination.

Paulina then is not quite perfect. I should not have supposed that her greatest failing was being ignorant in matters of religion. You will instruct her since you have much knowledge and many good books—it is a duty which you will not neglect—in return your sister-in-law, the Abbess, will teach her how to shine in the world.

Pray let M. de Lauzun be a little raised in your estimation. The King has taken him into favour; it is a great event and surprises every body—it pro-

vokes Mademoiselle amazingly. Adieu my dear child.

LETTER CCCXIII.

To the same.

Paris, February 9, 1689.

OUR two Grignans are returned from Court, which makes me quite happy. I was dull without them. Your son is very amiable, but I must not tell you so as it will increase your desire of seeing him.

The Abbé Tètu desires a thousand thanks to you for all your kindness. He has carried his vapours to Versailles, and named me to Madame de Maintenon as worthy of seeing Esther. She answered in a manner very flattering to me. I shall go to St. Cyr either Saturday, or Tuesday next, and shall say how much you are to be pitied in being deprived of such a pleasure. It will be performed every year for the advantage of those who are absent at present. Madame de Caylus, who represented Esther, was thought too perfect an actress, and will not appear any more. She affected the passions too strongly; simplicity alone is required from those innocent little girls.

I dined yesterday at Mademoiselle de Goileau ; it was a dinner of wits. The Abbé Polignae, an Abbè David, and Corbinelli, conversed most agreeably upon the philosophy of Descartes—some points they thought difficult to understand. You know how Corbinelli screams upon these occasions—they amused me exceedingly, and reminded me, but in a far less elegant style, of my dear little Cartesian,* to whom I listened with so much pleasure in spite of my ignorance. From thence I went to Madame de La Fayette's, where, by good fortune, I found only M. de Pomponne, and Barillon. We spent two hours most agreeably. They say that the English Parliament has elected the Prince of Orange King, declaring that James, by quitting the kingdom, has broken the treaty between a Sovereign and his subjects. That his flight is an abdication, and that they will make the kingdom elective. The Parliament refused to make the Princess of Orange Queen. This was yesterday's news. Somebody remarked upon hearing the cool manner in which King James tells his own story, that whoever listens to him will easily discover the reason of his being here.

I have seen Madame de Chaulnes and de Coulanges—they are charmed with Esther. The former sends you a hundred kind compliments, and

* Meaning Madame de Grignan.

wants to obtain your permission to take me to Brittany with her; as she has business here, she will not set out very soon.

LETTER CCCXIV.

To the same.

Paris, February 18, 1689.

THE Chevalier returned last night pretty well in health, but with gouty humours flying about him. The Marquis, after having given orders concerning his equipage, is going to take his turn at Court, and pass three days of the Carnival at Versailles. Madame de Coulanges is returned from St. Cyr where [she was well received and seated by Madame de Maintenon, and with her usual wit bestowed both new and elegant praises upon the performance. She returns there to-morrow with me—that is, we are expecting our answer, as the number of persons who want to go is so immense that I shall never think myself sure of a ticket till I have it in my hand.

Nine o'clock at night.

AT length the accounts from England are arrived—they are favourable to France—the Prince of Orange is not yet master. The cause does not advance so rapidly, nor will war be declared as soon as was expected— It will not be so dreadful as last year, as we are only to act upon the defensive, but you will have a thousand alarms and needless fears, and will refuse every amusement that might take off your attention from the ideal miseries which will torment you. The same fears will not worry me because I shall be in Brittany with Madame de Chaulnes. All sorts of reasons lead me to take that resolution, except those in which my affections are concerned—but I have an estate to sell, and must muster courage enough to take that journey, painful as it will be to my feelings, and to that tenderness which would naturally make me fly to my dear Countess.

Monday, February 21.

I HAVE paid my court at St. Cyr in a still more agreeable manner than I expected. I went with Madame de Coulanges, her sister, and the Abbé Tétu. We found our places kept by soldiers—an officer told Madame de Coulanges that Madame de Maintenon had reserved a seat for her near her own

chair. Judge what an honour—he said to me, ‘Madam, you may chuse your seat.’ I placed myself behind the Duchesses. Marshal Bellefond by chance was next to me. We listened to the piece with an attention which was remarked, and our admiration though uttered in a low voice, was well placed. I cannot express to you the charms of the performance—it is difficult to describe, and never can be imitated. The combination of the poetry and the music, and the chorusses so sublime and perfect. The very children, who perform the characters, seem made on purpose—the attention is wonderfully kept up, and the only disagreeable idea is that of seeing a termination to so delightful an entertainment. In this inimitable play every thing is simple and innocent, yet sublime and affecting—the sacred history is so well preserved, that it inspires respect. The music corresponds with the words, which are taken from the Psalms, or the Wisdom of Solomon, and adapted to the story of Esther. All this is beautiful, and the approbation which we bestow on this play is the genuine offspring of taste and attention. I really was delighted, and the Marshal also, who left his seat to tell the King how much he was pleased, and that he was placed near a lady who was worthy of seeing Esther. The King came up to our seat, and addressing himself to me said, ‘Madam, I am sure you are pleased with this performance.’ ‘Sire,’ said I, ‘what I

feel is beyond description.' He answered 'Racine has much genius.' 'Certainly,' said I, 'he has; but, Sire, these young people are exceedingly clever also; they enter into the subject as if they had been actresses all their lives.' 'Oh as for that,' said his Majesty, 'they certainly do.' He then left me an object of envy. I was almost the only new comer in the room, and the King was pleased with my sincere and quiet approbation. The Prince and Princess of Condé stopped to speak to me. Madame de Maintenon passed like lightning. She went off with the King. I answered every body properly, being in a fortunate vein. We returned at night to Paris by the light of flambeaus. I supped with Madame de Coulanges. I saw the Chevalier before I went to bed, and told him all my prosperities, not being willing to make a foolish mystery of trifles, as many people do. He has not, I believe, found me since ridiculously vain, or intoxicated, like a woman who had never been at Court. You may ask him. Immediately after seeing Esther that evening, the King learnt the news of the young Queen of Spain's death. She was only ill two days, had violent vomitings—that looks badly. The King imparted the melancholy news to the Duke of Orleans the next day. Great was his affliction. The

* Mary Louisa, daughter of the Duke of Orleans, and his first wife, Henrietta of England, daughter of Charles I.

Duchess was very violent in her exclamations, and the King left them with tears in his eyes.

It is reported that there is good news from England, not only the Prince of Orange is not elected King or Protector, but he is given to understand that both himself and his troops may return to Holland. This will save us a great deal of trouble, and if the good accounts continue, our Brittany will be more tranquil, and your brother will not be obliged to command the nobility of Rennes and Vitré—they have named him against his will. Any other man would be charmed with such an honour ; but he is quite sorry, not chusing under any name to enter the lists again with a provincial corps.

Adieu my dear child, be assured that of all those who command in the provinces, M. de Grignan is the most agreeably situated.

LETTER CCCXV.

To the same.

Paris, Ash Wednesday, February 23, 1689.

MY dear child, I am delighted with the life you lead at Marseilles. I admire that city which resembles no other. Oh how well I can conceive Paulina's admiration—so truly sincere and natural a surprise so perfectly original. I fancy her a pretty interesting creature—I like the style of her genius. I feel that I love her, but you are not as fond of her as you ought to be. You expect her to be perfect, but had she made a vow to be so, when she left her Convent. Are you not unjust? Have not all children their faults? Could you flatter yourself that she would not have her share? From whence do you derive a hope which is not in Nature? I think that if I were with you, I should do her many good offices, were it only in setting your imagination right, and asking you whether this little maiden who tries to please you, and to correct her faults, who loves and fears you, and has much cleverness, does not deserve to be placed in the list of promising children. This my heart tells me to say of my dear Paulina, whom I love. I desire you to embrace her for my sake. Pray dont forget to add to the

list of her good qualities the extreme delicacy of her conscience, which made her declare she would have nothing to do with magic when she saw the tricks of the jugglers. The life you lead, my dear child, though agreeable, must be fatiguing. You will be ill by setting up late and rising early. I cannot help being uneasy lest your health should suffer. Mine is perfect—I have nothing to say upon the subject.

The Chevalier and your son are at Versailles, where all pleasure is at an end, every thing having given way to the Duke and Duchess of Orlean's grief. That poor Queen of Spain died just at her mother's age, and was taken off much in the same uncommon manner. On the 10th of this month she was seized with violent vomitings, and no remedies took effect. She languished till the 12th, and had not one moment's ease. Her courage and religious fortitude were wonderful. She desired the King might be told that she did not regret life, and that she died a natural death—although at first she had exclaimed like her mother that she was poisoned, and like her she repented of having had such a thought. In short, poison is a word forbid at Versailles and all over France—still, however, the poor Queen is dead, and she is a real loss in the present state of affairs. Strange things are related of what passes in England; they have elected that furious Prince of Orange King—after great contestations

he is already crowned. The contrary was expected last week—but are they not Englishmen?

It is reported that King James is going to Ireland; this is believed, but I answer for nothing—this year we abound in lies. The Court takes mourning to-day for the Queen of Spain.

Monday, February 25.

HERE is your letter of the 18th just arrived, my dear child; do not tell M. de Grignan for he would laugh at me; but I really am delighted to know you safe at Aix. I remember a certain precipice by the side of which you must travel a long way. The idea of it affected my imagination. Your leagues are insupportable, and I am convinced that the distance from Marseilles to Aix is as great as from Paris to Meaux. I can imagine how happy you made your husband by giving yourself to the public with so good a grace. He was afraid you would be out of humour and desirous of hiding yourself; but I always assured him that he might trust to your good sense, knowing that my dear daughter would never do any thing improper or absurd.

I still continue in the idea of going to Brittany in spite of my inclination which would lead me to you, but I should be unworthy of being called your mother, if I had not some courage. You would have made a good Roman with your love for your country. Adieu my dearest.

LETTER CCCXVI.

To the same.

Paris, February 28, 1689.

THE Chevalier went yesterday to Versailles to know his destiny. He supposes himself reserved for the army of the Dauphin. The King of England is really gone to Ireland, where he was expected with impatience—he will be better there than here. He will pass through Brittany like lightning, and go straight to Brest where he will meet the Marshal d'Etrees, and find a fleet in readiness—he carries with him five hundred crowns—the King has given him arms for ten thousand men. When King James was taking leave, he said with a smile, that arms for himself were the only thing forgotten. Our King immediately presented him with his own—the heroes of ancient romance never did any thing more gallant. What will not that brave but unfortunate monarch achieve with those victorious arms. Imagine him decked with the casque and shield of Rinaldo, of Amadis of Gaul, and all the celebrated Knights of antiquity. I do not include Hector because he was unfortunate. There is not a friendly offer of any kind that our King has not made to him—generosity and magnificence can-

not go further. The Count d'Avaux goes with King James, because he understands the Dutch affairs much better than Barillon. The Queen of England is gone to shut herself up at Poissy with her son. She is truly deserving of compassion.

I must talk to you again of Paulina, that child so pretty, so amiable. Who would have imagined she had a temper so violent. I thought her all sweetness—yet do not be discouraged—she is clever, she loves you, she has self love, and wishes to please, and with those things, she will certainly correct herself. I assure you it is not to be expected in childhood, but at an age when reason has some power. Pride, which is baneful in many respects, is excellent on this occasion—try to reason with her without anger or violence, and without humbling her, for these only harden a haughty temper. With this management, I will answer for her becoming a little wonder. Make this business an affair of honour and conscience.

Esther is not yet printed. Racine is composing another sacred drama. The King has taken a taste for this sort of composition, and nothing else will be in fashion. But the history of Esther stands alone; neither Judith, or Ruth, or any other subject* can succeed as well.

* Racine wrote afterwards *Athalie*, which was as much admired and reckoned more sublime.

The King of England yesterday invested M. de Lauzun with the English Order of the Garter. The ceremony (which consists in a sort of oath being read) was performed in the church of Notre Dame. The King placed the collar on the opposite side to ours, and gave him a St. George, which had belonged to Charles I. and which is surrounded with diamonds, and worth at least ten thousand crowns. The star which presides over the fate of this little man is quite extraordinary.

March 2.

THE day that concludes Lent cannot be uninteresting to Paulina. I must scold you, my dearest, for not having sent her to enjoy herself in dancing at the good Langlies—where could be the harm in allowing her such an amusement. I must be angry with you also for reading your letters before you go to bed; yet I know it is scarcely possible to keep them till the next day—yet if you do not, your rest must be broken, since they often must recall disagreeable reflections, or fill your mind with new ideas, both equally inimical to sleep. Your imagination is worried, and the night passes without refreshing you. This you must allow to be true. Your son is very pleasing and amiable, and begins to pay some attention to his affairs. He

orders, he bargains, he calculates—it is a pity his father does not act in the same manner. The Chevalier will have told you what our King said to King James when he took leave of him. ‘I see you,’ said he, ‘depart with concern, yet I hope never to see you more; but if you should return be assured that you will find me exactly in the same sentiments as you leave me.’ Could any thing be better said? The King would not consent to the Queen’s going to Poissy—she is to see but little company. The farewell interview between her and her husband, affected every body; it was accompanied with tears and faintings. In short, you may easily conceive their feelings. The King of England is now where he ought to be—he has a good cause. He is the protector of the true religion; he must conquer or die since he possesses true courage.

Did I tell you that the President Barantin died suddenly, while sitting in council, two days ago? Will his wife, who always laughs, find a joke in this event? I dined, this day, with your son at Madame de Chaulnes. We shall not set out till after Easter—be assured, my dear child, nothing leads me to Brittany but business. Neither my son or his wife are at the Rocks—they are fixed at Rennes, near her mother. The solitude and retirement at the Rocks have no more charms for them—they will only visit their estate out of complaisance when I am there, but I shall give them their liberty in

the month of October. I have no doubt but you will return to Paris next winter. I shall have nothing to do but to be near you wherever you are. I believe M. de La Rochefoucault's maxim to be true, 'That cares are equally dispensed to all the different stations in life.' Some, however, there are, which may be called heavy. Adieu my dearest child.

LETTER CCCXVII.

To the same.

Paris, March 7, 1689.

IF you had seen your son set out on Saturday as we did, you would have mixed your tears with ours. It was impossible to avoid it—yet there is nothing to fear for him at present. We must look upon this as a mere journey of pleasure. He was in high spirits, and very agreeable, laughing at us, and occupied with his equipage which is in very good condition. If when I am in Brittany we hear of any thing advantageous in the way of matrimony for your son, we shall not fail to make him appear worth having.

M. de Grignan's letter made me shudder—I who can neither bear the idea or reality of a precipice,

what a dreadful thing to pass over one, and be within a hair's breadth of the most shocking death. I cannot conceive how your husband can bear to go to a place which the very Bears abandon—really the poor ladies de Charcè must be agreeably situated in their Castle. I am distressed lest these dæmons who disappear as soon as they are frightened by M. de Grignan, should return again when he is gone—it will therefore always be to begin again. We may say my dear child, that the King has servants full of zeal, since they value neither life or fortune, when pleasing him is in question. If we were as zealous in the service of our God we should be real saints.

You have now read Esther—printing has had its usual effect—that is, lessening the merits of the piece. You have heard that M. de La Feuillade says it is an appeal against the approbation of the public. You will judge for yourself—as for me I can only answer for the charm attached to the representation, which cannot be disputed by any one who has seen it.

March 11.

I HEAR the Duke de Chaulnes has done the honours of his government to the King of England in the highest perfection. He had ordered two suppers to be ready upon the road, one at ten, the other at twelve o'clock. The King partook of the

last which was at the Roche Barnard. He embraced M. de Chaulnes affectionately, having known him formerly. The King was entreated to retire to a chamber to rest, but he said he wanted nothing but food. He was conducted to a room where the fairies had prepared a hot supper, fish of all kinds, and every thing that was excellent. All sorts of accommodation for a large party of nobility of both sexes. The good King eat as heartily as if there had been no such man as the Prince of Orange in the world. He set out the next day, and embarked the 6th or 7th of the month. What a devil of a man this Prince of Orange is, who alone disturbs the peace of Europe—under what star is he born?

Let me know on what terms I am with the Coadjutor—we lived very well together at Paris. Say what you please to him, my dear child, from me, according to the footing you are upon with each other, for I do not chuse to be friends with your enemies.

LETTER CCCXVIII.

To the same.

Paris, March 16, 1689.

WE have this morning gained as great a victory as we could wish in the present state of affairs between you and M. d'Arguebonne. It is in your name, my dearest, that we have fought and conquered your enemies. We enjoyed this morning a most sensible pleasure. We were at the Court when the judges entered, having every reason to hope that we should confound our antagonists, and so we did, for about an hour after, M. de Bailli came out, and with his soft manner said to me in a serious tone, 'Madam, you have obtained what you wish.' I made no secret of this speech to the Chevalier, to Vaille, and Rochou. Our hearts were quite elated—my joy was rather saucy, and the Chevalier scolded me, declaring that he would not take me with him any more if I could not be silent—that is his greatest threat. Afterwards I wished again to triumph a little, but he scolded me and said that those who knew not how to dissemble knew not how to reign. Another counsellor soon came out who told M. d'Aiguebonne that he had lost his cause. I saw him steal softly away without

saying a word—he is accustomed to that kind of success. It reminded me of having formerly seen Madame d'Ourouer fly before me in the same tribunal where I had also M. de Bailli to carry me good luck. M. Gui remained quietly with us, and comforted himself by taking snuff. Another counsellor told us we had gained our point with one voice, which is a pleasing circumstance. Gui had wisely said to Rousseau, that when we succeeded in the last Court, the matter had not been well digested, and judgment pronounced by children. Rousseau took the opportunity of saying to him with pleasantry this morning, 'Sir, we have found two and twenty children more who have condemned you with one voice.' This retort made me laugh heartily, but the Chevalier's great soul would not let him listen to and enjoy these trifles. We thanked our judges before we left the hall, and varied as much as possible the expression of our gratitude. In a word, we returned in great spirits to dinner, and to say the truth all our party were assembled to receive us—and we are many of us now writing to you at the same time; the Chevalier leaves to me the recital of our victory, and at half past five we shall go together to return thanks to the Presidents, and others, who signalized themselves in our service. If you wish, my dear child, that I should tell you frankly my opinion of the Chevalier de Grignan, I shall say that you are under the greatest

obligations to him. Nothing could exceed the extent of his services, his vigilance, his foresight, the warmth of his solicitations, nor that with which he inspired his friends to make them enter into your concerns. His influence is very great; he spared no pains to serve you, and Heaven has rewarded him by giving him good health. In short, we are all so comfortable and happy at having been useful to you, that we want to write a book and call it 'The Light and Salutary Troubles of Friendship.' We would publish the work if we were not afraid of ruining the Printer by the few copies that would be sold, so rare are the persons convinced of that truth. You cannot, my dearest, love or thank the Chevalier too much. I don't know how I shall write upon any subject but our law-suit to-day.

What supported us in the affliction occasioned by the melancholy situation of the Archbishop of Arles, was not receiving any confirmation of his danger by letters that came this morning from Arles. They do not mention him, and we hoped that the faintings would have had less fatal consequences, and that the loss of that illustrious prelate might yet be retarded some months. You are perfectly right my daughter. It is *now*, and *now only* that it would be proper to make the request which was so improperly hurried before; but there are people who never own themselves in the wrong—God bless them.

Madame de Vins gave us some very good advice, and sent us compliments of congratulation almost on the field of battle. Our other friends desire me to present theirs to you. Adieu my dearest, I am too happy in having been able to do something for you. It is a pleasure that goes directly to my heart. My dear Count, you have your share in this. I embrace you both with great affection.

What will Monsieur Gaillard* say to this victory? I think I see his countenance and animated eyes. His brother is doing wonders at St. Germain.

* Madame de Sevigne admired M. Gaillard, a celebrated lawyer, at Aix, exceedingly; no countenance she said ever left so agreeable an impression upon her mind.

LETTER CCCXIX.*To the same.*

Paris, Friday, March 18, 1689.

YOU were perfectly right, my dear child, in supposing that I should be grieved at the Archbishop's* death. You cannot imagine how much his fine qualities make me regret him. I cannot recollect his goodness to his family—his tenderness towards them all, but particularly to you and your son without feeling what a loss he will be to your house. Never, I do not scruple to say so, never was there a heart equal to his—the mould in which it was formed is destroyed by the corruption of the times. There are no more in the world like his. You understood my feelings, and did me honour. I return you the compliment in doing justice to yours. Regretting him as we do, is a proof that we possess a little of his merit. We may be permitted thus to praise ourselves, since it is certain that we are more or less charmed with great qualities in proportion as we bear any resemblance to them in our own characters.

* Francis Adhemar de Monteil, Archbishop of Arles, uncle to Monsieur de Grignan; he died on the 9th of March, 1689.

My dear Count give me leave to condole with you on this occasion—you were tenderly beloved by that dear uncle—he loved his name and his house, and he was right, since both are truly honourable. I pity you since you have no longer this pattern of excellence to admire and respect. The oldest race is now gone—our turn, my dear Count, will come next—in the mean time I embrace you with tears in my eyes, as if I had the honour of bearing your name.

This affliction, my dear child, diminishes the pleasure our little victory gave us. The Chevalier talked of going on with the law business, but he would scarcely have time to see it finished, and it would be wrong to leave it half done—however whatever he does is right. You may now sleep in peace till the winter. I am delighted to hear that our letters, though received at night, do not disturb your rest. I will believe you, my dearest, and banish that anxiety which distressed me often. Madame de Chaulnes is happy at the thought of taking me with her to Brittany. I have a great deal of business at Buron, or rather at Nantes. I must take this one journey more, and never could find a better time. After that, we shall see what Providence has in store for me and when it will allow me to be wholly yours; I fancy we shall set off exactly at Easter. Father Gaillard preached this morning the

finest sermon in the world on the good Samaritan. He is the Bourdaloue of this year.

LETTER CCCXX.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, March 23, 1689.

I SHALL not retract what I have said in praise of Esther. I shall all my life be of opinion that nothing can be more charming than the novelty and style of that performance. I was delighted with it and thought it contained a thousand excellent applications, and so many important hints to a King, that I enjoyed particularly an amusement, which under the fascination of poetry and music, presented a number of excellent sentiments and solid truths. I felt enchanted with these different beauties, therefore am far from altering my opinion. Printing, as I told you, has had its too usual effect, and has been an appeal against the excessive approbation of the public. As for me I even read it with pleasure and think the critics will be ousted, as M. d'Arguebonne will be, very soon, if the Chevalier has leisure to pursue him. Our victory at the great council was brilliant and desirable. I think you will be satisfied with it. I am impatient to receive the letter

in which you will mention it. M. de Lamoignon repeated to me to-day that the advantage we have gained was of more consequence than we imagined. I told him he was mistaken, for we had felt it in its fullest extent. He is vastly occupied with the law suit between Mademoiselle, the Prince of Condé, and all the House of Lorraine, who solicit with as much perseverance as we could do. Next Thursday the pleadings begin.

Your son's letter will please you extremely; it is that of a man who attends to his profession and likes it. The King is so satisfied with M. de Castries, that he has made him a brigadier without any solicitation—so it ought to be. When recompences are bestowed at the first moment they have double value, and excite and encourage emulation. The King told the Cardinal de Bonzi that he need not thank him for the favour bestowed upon his nephew, since it was to please himself that he conferred it.

The King of England sailed on the 17th, and arrived in Ireland on the 19th. Little Mailli, who conducted him to Brest, is returned. Adieu my dearest child, I dread going further from you, it makes me ill, and I take this journey as I would a medicine. What grieves me is, that I have no time to throw away. On this I often think with sorrow, and although I submit to the will of Providence which separates us, what would become of me if I did not live in the hope of seeing you a gain.

LETTER CCCXXI.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, March 25, Annunciation Day.

WE have not received your letters, but still we begin ours. You will have set a good example this day—it is a great festival, and the foundation of that of Easter—in a word, the great day for Christians, since it is the Incarnation of our Lord—the Holy Virgin acts a principal part, but not the first. In a word, M. Nicole, M. Le Tourneux, and all our preachers, have said, in their best manner, all they know on the subject.

Your son has written me a letter full of affection; he has sincerely lamented his uncle, the Archbishop. It is thought his successor will soon be here. I am now disputing with Madame de Chaulnes. I wish not to go till after Easter—my dear child, I am grieved at leaving you again—I feel the increased distance. Reason says Brittany, and friendship, Paris—sometimes we must give way to that severe monitor—you know it better than any body, I must then try to imitate you.

Listen, I pray you, to this history; do you know Monsieur de B——, the ridiculous shepherd

of Fontainebleau, commonly called Cassepot? Do you recollect his figure, tall, thin, with the look of a madman, shrivelled, and pale? He lodged at the Hotel de Lionne, with the Duke and Duchess d'Etrées, Madame de Vaubrun, and her daughter. The latter went two months ago to the Convent of St. Mary's—it was supposed that her sister's happiness tempted her to become a Nun. But what think you had been Cassepot's employment while he was at the Hotel de Lionne? Why, love. Yes, my dear child, he was, with the figure I have described, making love to Mademoiselle de V——, and she liked him. Benserade applies to her what he said of Madame de ——, who pretended to love her husband. 'If she likes him, she may very well like another.' This girl of seventeen chose then to fall in love with this Don Quixotte, and yesterday he went with five or six of M. de Gevres's regiment, and forced the doors of the Convent with repeated strokes of a bludgeon. He entered the monastery with one of his people, found Mademoiselle de Vaubrun who was waiting for him, seized her and put her in a coach, and carried her to M. de Gevres, contracted a sort of marriage among themselves, slept with her, and this morning, before the sun rose, they had both disappeared, and their retreat has not yet been discovered. Of them one may truly say *Agnes and the dead body are gone*

*off together.** The Duke of Estrées exclaims and complains of B——, as having violated the laws of hospitality. Madame de V. wants to have him beheaded—M. de Gevres declares he did not know it was Mademoiselle de V——. All the B—— family, affect to prevent their kinsman's being prosecuted. I have not yet heard what is said of this business at Versailles. This, my dear child, is the gospel of the day—you know how such a story is repeated. What say you to the noble passion? I despise it when it stoops so low as to chuse such votaries.

LETTER CCCXXII.

To the same.

Paris, Monday, March 28, 1689.

WE do not set out till after Easter which pleases me very much. Madame de Chaulnes has taken leave—the King said many kind things to her concerning the Duke, her husband. We long to receive your letters to know the effect the news of our victory had upon you. We were a fortnight

* *Agnes et le corps mort s'en sont alles ensemble.* See Moliere's comedy of *L'Ecole des femmes*.

on the shore anxiously waiting to see if the vessel would reach the port. You have had the same thoughts and fears, and we shall be delighted to know you as perfectly at ease as we are. You are right when you say, I was not as happy when I gained my own law suit, which was forty thousand crowns in my pocket, I scarcely felt it in comparison with my present sensations. I was young and did not think seriously—business was then indifferent to me—you are much more interesting, and your interests far dearer to me.

Monsieur de Lamoignon has been much implicated in the affair of Cassepot, and Mademoiselle de V——. He is a relation of hers, and of M. de Gevres, who, after having assisted in the horrid affair, flew to Versailles to tell the King that being a friend of M. de B——, he could not excuse himself from assisting him. The King scolded him and said he had not entrusted him with the government of Paris for such a purpose. M. de Gevres humbly asked pardon, and his Majesty was softened. As for Monsieur de B—— he may go where he pleases; but if he is taken and tried, nothing can save him—all his family will do their utmost to conceal him. Monsieur de Lamoignon has brought the girl home to her mother, who was ready to expire when she saw her. Mademoiselle de V—— says she is not married, yet has passed two nights with that horrid creature. Some people say she

had been married to him four months, and acquainted the King with it by letter. Nothing can be more wild and absurd than the whole affair. The Duke of Estièes is excessively provoked that a man he so generously took into his house should have thus violated the laws of hospitality. The Duke de Charost and him quarrelled violently lately. It was on Lady Day. The Duke d'Estrées in a passion carried his reproaches and threats very far, not mincing words. 'Sir,' said the Duke de Charost in a rage, 'if I had not just taken the sacrament I would tell you so and so'—at the same time, saying every thing that passion could dictate. The other was enraged beyond description—but nothing was so droll as the Duke de Charost emptying his quiver and fancying he said nothing—and if such were his speeches upon the day of the communion, what might have been expected upon any other.

We supped yesterday at the Abbè Pelletiers, the Lamoignons, Coulanges, Courten, the Abbè Bigorre, and your mother. As none of us had dined we were quite voracious. It was the finest Lent repast I ever saw—excellent fish, very well dressed, delicious ragouts from the hand of the best of cooks—never was a supper more completely excellent. Every body wished for you most sincerely, and the Saint Laurence wine so animated that wish, that nothing was heard but the tinkling of glasses which plainly proved the wine came from

you. You have no good fish in your sea—my dear child, I remember it well. I could not know a soal again in that part of the world. I think you must find it difficult to keep Lent—as for me I feel no inconvenience from the change of diet. M. de Lamoignon, with his nephritic complaints, has not thought of eating meat.

I am just in a humour at present to care little about time. I am wishing for a pleasanter period, and therefore push this one from me with indifference as you do; but when I reflect upon what I am throwing away, and to what this insensibly leads me, I am frightened, and only support myself by a resignation to the will of Providence, which bears me up against the melancholy futurity which age promises me. I should be too miserable if I had not that consolation—‘If you did but know the gift of God,’ was the text of an excellent sermon which I well remember. I heard another the same day from Father Soanen—the Samaritan was not disgraced—it is a real affliction to me when such a subject is spoilt by bad preachers—all those who preach this year are only listened to, when the great man is silent—this great man is Bourdaloue. Adieu my dearest, do not pretend to answer all this chit chat. Always remember that I have but one letter to write; if I was obliged to attempt only one more I should run away.

LETTER CCCXXIII.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, March 30, 1689.

HEAVEN be praised, my dearest child, you are now as comfortable as ourselves, and no longer teased with doubts and fears. You know as much as we do at present; but seriously you set too great a value upon the trifling fatigues I have undergone in your service, and the little use I have been in this affair. You talk of obligation and gratitude as if you had forgot the commerce of friendship, and were ignorant of the pleasure of being occupied for those we love. What we did, has been too well paid by being successful. We ought to thank you for giving us an opportunity of awakening our zeal; besides you send us so many thanks, and express so charmingly the sense you have of our attentions that we are quite confused. I know not if the Chevalier is as much ashamed as myself.

I had no idea that my narration was so animated. I am sure it could not be more so than M. Gaillard's eyes. I see in his lively countenance a proof that his admiration is not the offspring of ignorance as is the case with many people—in a word, my dear, you have been pleased with my account of our vic-

tory. The Chevalier has just told me that Madame de Buri, on her return from Paris, met the Princess of Conti, who asked her what she had been doing. 'I have been soliciting, Madam.' 'Soliciting!' said the Princess; 'and in what cause?' 'In that,' said La Buri, 'against the Messieurs de Grignan.' 'Oh fye,' said the Princess, 'can you still pursue that business, having been once cast and in such a manner?' My dear child, I beg pardon of the Chevalier's great soul, but I must own that my *little one* was much gratified by this rebuke to that woman so fond of the chicanery of the law. She was coming from the judge just as I entered his house, and said upon seeing me, 'Sir, I leave you in good hands.' The tone with which she said this, nettled me; but I had the sense not to reply. I might however have told her a few truths, but I did not. If you follow the advice of all your friends you will settle your affairs in such a manner as to come here next winter and give the finishing stroke to this law suit—see M. de Grignan received a Knight, enjoy your son's company, pay your respects at Court—all these things combined will make the resolution worth taking. Your comparing Monsieur de Gui, who has a rage for being condemned in every court of justice, to the madman who persisted in trying to bring a dead body to life, humbles me extremely. I see the good use you make of a story which I once in presence of the

Chevalier spoilt so completely. It was a misfortune, as I think the tale a good one—you have brought it to life my dearest and applied it extremely well.

We hear that the King of England has been received in Ireland with transport. The Prince of Orange is so ill with his asthma that all the troops he collects desert, thinking he is going to die. Seven regiments have left him to go to Scotland—for my part I am convinced that our King, by the assistance of Divine Providence, will surmount all his enemies and clear away all the clouds which now appear so black and threaten to fall upon us—the Swiss are softened—Monsieur Amelot has done wonders—this is a great event. Messieurs de Beauvilliers and de Lamoignon, assisted by the season of devotion, (Lent) will pacify all the violent spirits now so irritated at Mademoiselle de Vauban's elopement, the particulars of which I have told you—the public will gain something by being rid of that odious Cassepot.

We still intend setting off immediately after Easter. I continue to feel the same degree of affliction at the thoughts of going further from you. I know not how this journey will turn out. I fancy I shall not see your brother who is obliged to be at the head of the nobility in Brittany, and in despair at being drawn into such an immense expence for so disagreeable a business. He admires how his affairs are influenced by those of the Prince of Orange,

that d'Aiguebonne of Europe, as you very properly call him, but what a concatenation of events Providence has formed to take your brother from his retirement to make him return to the world and to the profession of arms in the way least agreeable to himself. Your son is not exposed to the least danger at present—enjoy these hours of peace—in other places some little skirmishes have taken place. Chamilli has been a little beaten, and Gandelli very severely wounded; but Toirais has sustained a very bold and brilliant action in which he conquered and killed three or four hundred men. Affairs in England go on well—the Prince of Orange loses ground every day. A wit has written upon the door of the Palace of Whitehall, ‘This large house to be lett at Midsummer.’ Both Scotland and Ireland are against the Prince—at the latter King James was very well received. He has promised the Protestants all sorts of religious liberty, and his protection, if they remain faithful to him.

LETTER CCCXXIV.

To the same.

Paris, April 11, 1689.

AT length, my dear child, you have left Aix, of which you seem heartily tired. You are at Grignan, how does the solitude and all the disagreeable things that have arisen in your absence, agree with you? It appears to me that your great desire of being alone is nothing more than giving way to the natural melancholy cast of your mind, which delights in miseries and anxieties, you would be afraid of any thing that might take off your attention from the uneasiness you chuse to feel upon your son's account, the moment he will be threatened with the least danger; but surely you are cruel to yourself in not enjoying at least the time when he is perfectly safe.

I fancy we shall set out the day after to-morrow. Madame de Carman* goes with us—she is very amiable—we shall have a great retinue—you must

* Mentioned in the first letters of this collection under the name of Mademoiselle de Murinais.

direct to me at Rennes. I shall soon be tired of the noise and confusion of that place.

The affair between the Duke d'Estrées, and M. de Gevres, is made up. This Mademoiselle de Vaubrun has so repeatedly declared that she is not married, and that she chuses to be a Nun, that they have placed her at the Convent of St. Dennis. The world has gained by all this the driving Casse-pot out of France. Adieu for the present, my dear child; preserve to me that affection which constitutes the comfort of my life.

April 12.

WE set out to-morrow and sleep at Bonnelle—the rest of our party move at eight or nine o'clock—but Madame de Chaulnes who is all activity begins her journey at the dawn of day. You remember how in going to Bourbon I found it easier to accommodate myself to her ways than to try to mend them. I am going to resume the same conduct, and from my accommodating temper shall not be distressed by any thing—all the precautions and security that can be wished for in a journey are taken in this—and I shall even be freed from the trouble of having fears, of screaming, and blushing. The good Duchess takes all that upon herself, and I shall remain with the appearance of courage and boldness when compared to the fears.

and timidity which she will discover—thus do we find means to obtain praise when we least deserve it.

The Chevalier was rather vexed at your having left Aix without procuring the money you wanted. There are things that must not be left unfinished ; they sometimes escape us as soon as we are at a distance. Heaven grant, my dear child, that we may soon meet again—may it preserve you. Take care of your health ; mine is only valuable to me by its being interesting to you. Adieu my beloved Countess ; I weep, how foolish, but it is the idea of adding to our distance that wounds me.

Wednesday, April 13.

NOT only we have postponed our journey to-day but we have determined not to set off for Brittany these ten days on account of M. de Chaulnes having been obliged to go to Nantes—his good lady came this morning to entreat me to go with her to Chaulnes. I did not hesitate to accept her invitation, being so completely on the wing, and having taken my leave of Paris I may as well go and rest myself in the country. Madame de Carman is of the same opinion—thus is the matter settled, and we go to-morrow. You are now, my dearest, at Grignan—I feel your anxieties—you were afraid there would be no war, and were thinking in what

part of Europe you could send your son. Providence has made a jest of your foresight—Europe is now every where in a flame. You had not thought of the Prince of Orange, who is the Attila of his time. To-day an important piece of news is circulated which, if true, will make a diversion. The King of Poland is said to have declared war against the Emperor, and the Turks not having made peace, the borders of the Rhine will not be very formidable. In a word, my dear child, all is doubt to us, but all is in the hands of God. Our young man already accustomed to the army, well informed, and very capable, having been at three sieges before the age of seventeen, are all events you did not expect. Adieu, my dearest, remember that you are a woman of fortitude, that your son is in the care of the Almighty, and you may hope to see him return in safety and health.

LETTER CCCXXV.

To the same.

Chaulnes, April 17, 1689.

WE left Paris as I told you we intended to do on Thursday—the two ladies and myself in the best carriage with the best horses, and with an immense retinue, every precaution taken both for our comfort and safety. We slept at Pont, a very neat inn, and came here the next day, the roads very bad. This house is large, and has a noble appearance, yet is but half furnished, and the gardens much neglected. Scarcely a scrap of verdure to be seen—not one nightingale to be heard—in short, it is winter upon the 17th of April, but it is easy to imagine the beauty of these walks if they were kept in order—every thing is regular and grand, the country is fine and the views pretty, but flat—there is much magnificent furniture in this house which I have not yet seen. It contains every thing that is agreeable and convenient, and deserves all you have read of it in verse and prose; but nothing can exceed the proceedings of this good and amiable Duchess; her attentions and kindness for me are such, that if you love me (of which I have no doubt) you must feel obliged to her for all the friendship

she shews me. We shall remain in this agreeable mansion six or seven days more, and then by the way of Normandy we shall reach Rennes about the second or third of next month.

I have just received your letter of the 9th, I see you do too much. You trust to your youth which will not save you—you write too much—you refuse being bled—in a word, I am quite displeased with you. As for your law suit both the Chevalier and I are now unable to be useful. I am gone, and he is going; it is a business that cannot be finished in a short time. Hercules could not conquer Anteus, nor can this monster be destroyed in less than three months. It must be the Archbishop of Arles who will take charge of this affair.

Tuesday, April 19.

I HAVE been strolling in these noble alleys, the Duchess being shut up with her people of business, and Madame de Carman too delicate to venture out. I call this *rehearsing for the Rocks*—my dismal thoughts accompanied me, yet I felt a pleasure in being alone. This is certainly a very agreeable house where much liberty is enjoyed. You know the Duchess's good and solid qualities. Madame de Carman is very amiable—I have tried her—she has more real merit and genius than she discovers to the world, and is very far from being as ignorant

as the common run of women. She adds every day to knowledge already acquired, much reading—what a pity that she is settled in Brittany. Corbignelli is still reckoned amongst us the best creature in the world—always lost in his philosophy which he has *Christianized*, he reads now nothing but religious books.

LETTER CCCXXVI.

To the same.

Chaulnes, April 24, 1689.

WE intended to begin our journey to-day, my dear child, but it is put off till to-morrow. Madame de Chaulnes was seized last night with such a violent sore throat and swelling near her ear that we knew not what to do to her. At Paris she would have been bled, but here she was only rubbed for some time with our famous balsam, which being well applied to the parts affected and covered with paper, (the patient being put to bed well wrapped up) produced quite a miracle. Will you believe, my dearest, that in one night this precious balsam cured her completely both of the sore throat and swelling near her ear. She is now as well as ever, and it is only for form sake that she stays at

home to-day. It is a divine remedy—take care of the balsam you have still remaining.

Your head aches make me uneasy—how can you think of comparing them to Pascal's—you make me tremble. The violent pains that intense study brought upon him were the torment of his life and shortened his days. It is not always necessary to solve a problem in Euclid to distract one's head—any thing that exhausts and fatigues the brain has the same effect. I have fears lest the air of Grignan should hurt you. You seem to regret the air of Livry, abused as it often was by those who disliked the place ; but to us how charming it was, how refreshing were the soft rains which fell—never my dear child, can we forget that sweet spot. What you say of the want of rain in Provence is excellent. What is rain ? What is it like ? Is there such a thing in the world ? and your comparing the few drops that fall to the tears of children who weep more out of anger than tenderness is inimitable. Did not Paulina laugh at the idea ? She is a happy child to be near you. You are very kind in making me so often your subject. I appear to more advantage when represented by your glowing pencil, than when in my natural state. I have rested myself from all my fatigues in this fine castle—would to God your health was as good as mine. I wish your buildings could be erected in the same manner as were formerly the walls of Thebes by Amphion.

You will, I suppose, pretend to be ignorant of this piece of fabulous history, but I am sure my Paulina is not.

Wednesday, April 27, at Pecquigni.

WE left Chaulnes on Monday and slept at Amiens, where Madame de Chaulnes is as much honoured and respected as you are in Provence. The Intendant, Monsieur de Chauvelin, gave us a very fine supper of fish and vegetables, it being St. Mark's day; and yesterday a superb dinner in another style—after dinner we came here, and can perceive in this Castle all the pride and splendour of the heiress of Pecquigni displayed in perfection—it is an old building situated on an eminence commanding a view of the town. There is also a Dean and Chapter with twelve Canons as with you. I know not if the foundation is rich, but I can say that there are terraces looking over the river Somme (which winds a hundred ways about the meadows) a beauty that Grignan cannot boast of. About a quarter of a mile from hence you see the remains of one of Cæsar's camps, the entrenchments of which are still held in high veneration. It is the Pont du Gard * of this part of the

* A very surprising bridge of that name over the river Gordon in Lower Languedoc; it is built of hewn stone of an

world. I think I hear you say 'But my dear mother, what are you doing? Are you not going to Brittany?' I answer yes my daughter, I am going; but as M. de Chaulnes will not be at Rennes till the 9th of next month, we have a great deal of time and shall stay here two days longer. This delay is not inconvenient to me—my plan is to be at Nantes either in June or July.

We are now reading the life of the Duke d'Epernon which comprehends almost a century—it is extremely entertaining. I am at present quite ignorant of news; I know not even how you are, if you have been bled, if your dreadful wind still amazes you with its violence. I confess I dread its effects upon your constitution. I know nothing of the Chevalier or of my dear Marquis. I hope to obtain a great deal of information to-morrow at Rouen, from whence I shall write to you again. Adieu, I feel that I am greatly attached to Paulina, and I think that in the little disputes that arise between you I should take her part.

amazing length and thickness, and has three arches one above the other. This bridge is the work of the Romans.

LETTER CCCXXVII.

To the same.

Caen, May 5, 1689.

I GUESSED that I should receive here yours of the 21st of April—to have lost such a letter would indeed have been a pity. How delightfully, and how much from the heart do you talk to me of your affection. I agree with you, my dear Countess, that the affair of Avignon is comforting. Your expences have been immense, and all you can hope is to repair some of the mischief done to your fortune. Time has produced some good things, and Providence may have more in store for you, and may give you the means of returning to Paris.

I fancy you will not have the courage to obey your good priest Lanterne. Can you resist giving Paulina (who has genius) the pleasure of reading Corneille's beautiful works? Can she do better than read Polyencte and Cinna, and his other pieces? To have nothing of devotion but these privations seems to be quite absurd, and a plan without connection or conformity with that laid out for her before. I do not find that the Pomponnes manage

thus with Felicity.* She learns Italian, and every thing likely to form and enlighten her mind. I am sure she will be taught to study and explain the works in question. Madame de Vins was educated in the same manner—yet the Pomponnes will not fail to teach their daughter her religion—they will tell her what is required of a true Christian—this is all I shall say upon the subject.

I must now talk to you of our journey—we were three days upon the road from Rouen to this place. We met with no adventures; but fine weather and spring in all its charms accompanied us constantly. We eat the best things in the world, went to bed early, and did not suffer any inconvenience. We were on the sea coast at Dives, where we slept. The country is beautiful, and Caen an exceeding pretty town, the most lively and best situated you can imagine. The streets are beautiful; there are many fine buildings and handsome churches—above all, it is the birth-place of many of our famous authors.† Our friend Segrais is gone to M. de Matignon's at which I grieve.

* Daughter to M. de Pomponne, since married to the Marquis of Forci, Secretary of State.

† John Renaud de Segrais, Member of the French Academy, was born at Caen, as were Malherbe, Huet, &c. &c.

Dol, May 9.

WE arrived here yesterday pretty much fatigued, and our horses and suite still more so. We went from Caen to Avranches in two days. We found that the good Bishop of that city had been dead and buried above a week—he was Tesse's uncle, a holy prelate, who was so much afraid of dying out of his *diocese* that he never stirred from it—death would be very cunning if it could catch many bishops of our acquaintance in *theirs*. We found all the deceased's servants in tears; but his shade gave us a very good supper and lodging. I could see from my chamber the sea and Mont Michel, that proud mountain which you saw so towering, and that saw you so beautiful. I dwell with much tenderness upon the remembrance of that journey. We dined at Ponterson, do you recollect it? This time we rambled a great while on the shore, always the mountain in view, and I always thinking of my dear daughter—at length we arrived here, where I defy death to catch the bishop. We found one of M. de Chaulne's officers occupied in receiving the troops that are arriving from all quarters. It is a melancholy thing to observe the surprise and grief of the poor Bretons, who had not seen any, since the wars between Monfort and the Count de Blois—they are all weeping and lamenting their hard fate. We are resting ourselves to-day—

your brother and his wife are at Rennes. I shall be at our good Marbœuf's, although she is *not* upon very pleasant terms with the Duke and Duchess of Chaulnes, being quite devoted to M. de Pontchartrain; but this little inconvenience must be past over, and I shall take no notice of it, having no quarrels with any body. Adieu, I am quite well, and quite rested. My good Duchess embraces you most tenderly.

LETTER CCCXXVIII.

To the same.

Rennes, May 11, 1689.

WE arrived here yesterday, having left Dol in the morning; it is nine miles from hence. We have travelled 300 miles in eight days and a half—the dust made our eyes ache, but saluting thirty ladies, who came to meet the Duchess, was still more fatiguing than the dust, or the journey. Madame de Carman, who is delicate, was half killed by this scene, but I bore it extremely well. The Duke de Chaulnes met us at dinner, and received us with the sincerest affection. I discovered your brother in the midst of the crowd, we embraced each other tenderly—his little wife was delighted to see me. I gave up my place in the Duke's coach

to the Bishop of Rennes, and went to my son's, where I changed my dress and refreshed myself. I supped at the Governor's, and then went home with Madame de Marbœuf, at whose house I am lodged like a Princess—a handsome chamber well furnished with crimson damask, and as much ornamented as a room at Paris; an excellent bed, in which I slept admirably—add to this an amiable hostess who is happy to have me—here I am fixed for some days. My daughter-in-law as well as myself, looks with a longing eye to the Rocks—dying to repose herself there, we shall take our time to steal away. I find my son's wife as lively and agreeable as ever, behaving to me with great affection, fond of you and M. de Grignan—her passion for him * diverts us much. Your brother is as usual a delightful companion, very happy to see me—he looks well, is in perfect health, full of wit and pleasantry. He has heard of your son's fame, and is gratified and surprised that so much solid praise can belong to so young a man.

Let me hear, my dear child, a word of your health; mine is so perfect that it amazes me. You complain of giddiness, what name do you chuse to give to your complaints since you no longer call them vapours—our Capuchin Friar is no longer

* Monsieur de Sevigne's lady had never seen Monsieur de Grignan.

here. I cannot now consult any body for you and Paulina. I exhort you to make a skilful use of that child's desire to please you—if you do she will become an accomplished woman. I recommend also employing her talent for writing, by making her your little secretary—with such a good hand and orthography can you do better than give her occupation.

Sunday, May 15.

OUR good Governors in the most friendly manner try to detain us here a few days longer—it would be difficult to refuse their request—the Duke often talks to me of you—he is occupied with his militia. It is curious to see these poor Bretons taught to wear a hat, they who never had any thing but a cap upon their heads; they cannot comprehend the exercise in the least, nor what they are forbid to do. When they had their muskets on their shoulders and the Duke past, down dropt their gun on one side, and their hat on the other, in attempting to salute him. They were then told that they must *not* salute him; but soon after when the exercise was over, they saw the Duke, and immediately stuck their two hands upon their heads lest their hats should come off. They have been told that when they are in the ranks they must not

move either to the right or to the left, in consequence of which they allowed themselves to be trod under M. de Chaulnes horses' feet, rather than move a step out of the way, although every effort was made for that purpose. In short, my dear child, it is difficult to conceive how Bertrand du Gueslin managed to make our poor Bretons in his time the best soldiers of France.

LETTER CCCXXIX.

To the same.

Rennes, May 25, 1689.

I AM just setting out with my son and his wife for the Rocks. The Governor is gone to Lower Brittany—his lady follows him immediately, and means to wait for him at St. Maloes. We have been a fortnight here out of complaisance, and I am really so fatigued with visits and duties that I confess myself to be at the last gasp. I want rest and the silence of my beloved Rocks, yet will not make an abuse of the blessings it can bestow, for I always recollect your commands. We supped last night at the Bishop of Rennes—it was an absolute feast—This is the country for good eating; the meat well larded and as peculiarly excellent as the butter. I

will let you know when I go to Nantes, and your brother to put himself at the head of the nobility in Brittany. My wish is to live retired till some of my rents become due, that I may send money to Paris to pay some of my most pressing debts, I require to be laid aside a little like large ships that want to be repaired.

The Chevalier will settle your most pressing affair before he sets off. I participate in the pleasure the sight of him will give you, and in the comfort of knowing that he will derive benefit from the waters of Balaruc. I am sure they will do him good. M. de Grignan will return triumphant and not deserve to be thrown over those broken balustrades, so convenient for the designs you meditated—but seriously will you always be the dupe of that immense expence—recollect how often the Bise has played you such tricks. You quite alarmed me—I imagined the wind had thrown down all your trees, and consequently that the nightingales could sing no more. I rejoice that it is not so.

Here is news from Brest. M. de Chateaurenaud has happily disembarked his troops in Ireland, also the arms and money which he had on board. Lord Herbert attacked M. de Gabarel who was at sea with a part of the fleet; M. de Chateaurenaud came to his assistance—they fought the English seven hours and forced them to retire to their ports in a very shattered condition. The French followed

hem and on their return met with seven Dutch merchantmen which they carried into Brest—this capture is estimated at a million of crowns.

LETTER CCCXXX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, June 1, 1689.

PAULINA is too happy in being allowed to be your secretary—from you she learns to think and form her style—by instructing her you relieve your head and mine. Continue to do what is so useful to yourself, your daughter, and me. I am amazed at the Chevalier's hesitating concerning the waters of Balaruc—I was present when he was advised to take them. After having heard a great deal in their praise, I should imagine the matter ought then to have been decided—from thence he will visit you, my dear child, what a pleasure for you and all the family. You will have much to say—subjects will never fail you.

Your comparing the noise of the Bise to that which proceeds from the tongues of your ladies at Aix is inimitable. I know how much you attend to the conversation of such a set of females, and can very well believe that you listen more attentively

to the wind; but from the description you give me of the latter it is evident that you wish it to cease even more ardently, than the court those ladies pay you—be assured that the additional violence with which you now hear the wind is occasioned by your tower being most absurdly taken down—it certainly was not placed there without a reason—it sheltered you and broke the first impetuosity of the storm. Now that you have no defence I am uneasy, and in truth the Archbishop* might very well have avoided pulling down the towers that belonged to his forefathers. I did not know that he was so well received at Versailles—you tell me many things of which I was ignorant. He chuses then to have the credit of finishing our law suit—Rochon is returned, which is fortunate. Madame de Buri was not wrong in her opinion of what might be done in the great council. She expected to place us in a labyrinth from whence we should not be able to escape. She had found a method of involving us in all the intricacies of chicane—by a miracle we received timely notice of the snare—every thing was fortunate in that business. Apropos of labyrinths, that at the Rocks is extremely pretty; our walks have also great merit. My son's rage at

* The Coadjutor was then Archbishop of Arles by the death of his uncle.

present is to wish that Monsieur de Grignan was here, and to fancy that he would not be moped among us.

We are reading the Bishop of Meaux's Variations—I think it a most excellent book. Time flies with extreme rapidity, although without pleasure and even with some sorrows, still it hurries us with too swift a pace. We have had no rain these six weeks, but much heat; all at once the air is cold even without rain, and we are glad to have fires. I mentioned to you that all the nobility in this province to the number of five or six hundred gentlemen have chosen your brother to be at their head. This is reckoned a great honour, but it will be a very foolish expence. He has not yet received an order to join—We hope they will not make an unnecessary encampment.

LETTER CCCXXXI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Sunday, June 5, 1689.

I HAVE received your two letters at the same time, and rejoice that I resisted the inclination I felt of making myself uneasy. Martillac assures me that you are in perfect health, and that remedies were never administered at a more proper time—they have cured you of your troublesome ills, and that is sufficient to raise them to fame. I have lost sight of Madame de Chaulne's complaint in her legs—she writes to me often, but never mentions them. As for me, my dearest, I told you my health was perfect—the physic I took did me neither good or harm. I have no vapours, and do not take Jacob's Essence, it being folly to do any thing when one is well. I have no more startings in the night, no heat in my hands—in short (interesting yourself as you do in my health) you are ungrateful if you do not thank God for giving me such a share of that blessing, and you ought moreover to believe implicitly what I say of myself. Sometimes I am astonished at my health, and like you am tempted to make it the subject of ideal misery, thinking that it cannot last long in such perfection, and that I must

look forwards to the ills which fall to the lot of most mortals after a certain age—God's will be done—I shall humbly submit to his dispensations. He orders the Chevalier to seek strength from the waters of Balaruc. I am convinced he cannot do better. You will be happy to see him at Grignan, and that pause will do him as much good as the waters. What a charming party you will have, and when it pleases Providence to give you also your mother and your son, I shall be truly grateful, but I dare not look to a happiness yet so distant. There is something droll in the idea of Madame de Bagnol's interview with the Marquis—he, whom she had left a few years ago a little boy, transformed all at once into a warrior, easy and bold in his manner, who makes no difficulty of throwing his arms about her neck with the familiarity of former years. He has now got rid of the timidity which was his only fault—how amiable and promising he is—God preserve him—this we must always say. Madame de La Fayette will write to M. de Boufflers. Your son finds friends every where—they are at first yours, but they soon become his. I hear the Chevalier sets out to-day at which I rejoice.

I hope I do not commit too great a sin when I feel extremely happy at Monsieur de Lavardin's return—I very well conceive how useful Avignon is to you. Providence sent you that assistance. I am continually thinking of you and your affairs, yet

I do not neglect my own, but give all the necessary orders. The principal thing is to remain here some time, and remit money to Paris—but the difficulty is to get any here, the troops destroy every thing. We take as many precautions as if the Prince of Orange had no other business than to attack us; but in all probability there is nothing real, except the ruin brought upon this province. Your brother is still with us—we tremble lest orders from M. de Chaulnes should arrive to make him head his nobility, of which he is called the Colonel—by the by, our soldiers begin to do the exercise with a tolerable grace, and will soon equal their neighbours. The beginning is certainly ridiculous. I assure you there are some troops at Vittrè that make a very good figure.

Do not imagine, my dear daughter, that I have displeased M. and Madame de Chaulnes by taking up my residence at Madame de Marbœuf's. I told them my intention and they approved. Madame de Carman was at their house, and I really should not have had a moment's rest there. At Madame de Marbœuf's I was perfectly comfortable, and I have managed so well as to reconcile the Chaulnes to her. They have forgotten the past for my sake, and sent her an invitation to dinner. Her crime was, having received Monsieur de Pontchortain at her house, and having given him a magnificent supper. She is reported also to have said that he

was looked upon as the saviour of this province. You can imagine the effect of such a speech—she denies having ever made it, and the whole affair is at an end.

I am sorry it was a cold that prevented Paulina's writing for you. I am now used to her hand and to the thought that she gives you ease. I was not the cause of your being favoured with M. Descarte's letter—she was resolved to send it you. You will, I doubt not, answer her with cleverness and skill. She gives you a pretty little question to solve—you may, by treating it in a light manner, get off exceedingly well. If Madame du Bois de La Roche's brother joined to his Parisian accent his sister's violent horse laughs, you could not have kept your countenance. You will have Larris in Provence; he is I think a son of the late Lenets, who was attached to the late Prince of Condé, and who had an amazing deal of wit. I was very young when I used to laugh with him. You describe perfectly well the pride and confidence of youth—young people think the world made for them—nothing seems impossible; every thing is to fall before them. With another sort of character and far less beauty than you possessed, I have known those feelings and the haughty confidence of youth; but as you very well observe, there comes a time when we must change our style. We find that we want every body—a law suit requires solicitations—we must

abate of our pride, and do like other people. We must narrow and confine our genius in some points, and extend it in others. I assure you your skill in business is far superior to mine, and excites my admiration.

We have dreadful weather, rain, wind, and excessive cold—no more walks—send us I entreat you some of your heat—let us feel your sun—but as for your Bise we beg to be excused; it would be too noisy a companion.

LETTER CCCXXXII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Wednesday, June 8, 1689.

YOU act wisely in resolving to go to your estate at Avignon; it is but just that people who give you so willingly the salary of their Vice Legat, should have the satisfaction of seeing you. You could not chuse a more proper time—you will afterwards be at liberty and not obliged to leave your Castle but when it suits you so to do. You will indeed have a delightful party in it, and even by the time this letter reaches you, is it possible that the Chevalier is with you—it is a happiness for you and for him also. Will my time never come?

To make the chapter of health short, I shall tell you that I am perfectly well, and am careful that I may remain so. I have no more the rage of walking in the dew, nor by the light of the moon. I begin to cure of those follies, and I think it singular enough that at Livry I was as fond of those things as when I was only twenty, but now it is over. After we have read a great deal and conversed together, we separate, and I retire alone to my woods where I read over your charming letters with a mixture of pleasure and pain. The Chevalier's account of M. de La Trousse's situation alarms me exceedingly. Let me know what you hear of him. I imagine, my dear child, that this letter will find you altogether at Grignan, and that you will not have left Paulina at Aubenas. I shall be happy if I am the cause of your kindness to her being increased, and if I know that she remains near you. I am convinced that gentleness and reasoning will have all power with her—what other method can be good when a child is clever and has a desire to correct her faults and to please. Your brother is still with us—we dread the arrival of orders that will hurry him to Lower Brittany where his only business will be spending a great deal of money, and our advantage, losing our entertaining companion and indefatigable reader—this puts us in a passion.

I enclose a memorial which Madame de Marboëuf desires me to send you, to know if it is true that the

son of Monsieur de M—— is so rich and well settled. As for me I can witness that he has a very fine Castle, handsome furniture and plate. She wants me to tell her of the grandeur of his house—I say it is grand, but I mean his Castle. We must get over this difficulty as well as we can, and may safely say all the rest is good. I shall be happy to be useful to this worthy man who seems to be a friend of yours, and desirous of leaving your part of the world, and marrying his son in our Brittany. I shall do my best for him and so will your brother as soon as you have answered this memorial, and I shall be sure of doing what you wish. Adieu my dear Countess, here is quite enough for to-day—you have too much good company with you to have time either to read or write such long letters.

LETTER CCCXXXIII.

Monsieur de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan.

At the Rocks, Sunday, June 12, 1689.

I DECLARE I had rather have composed your letter to Mademoiselle Descartes than an Epic poem, and even half her uncle's works. I am enchanted with it, and never did Rohault * whom you quote, speak so clearly as you do. As for myself I protest that if the Inquisitor of Avignon leaves you your liberty after you have explained your doctrine to him, I shall hold it entirely orthodox, and the only rational one that can be supported in a mystery of faith. Do not, however, believe that this letter which I praise so much is without faults—it has one which I have had a great deal of trouble to correct, and that is, a hand writing as difficult to decypher as the subject on which you reason, is difficult to understand. In fact it is not writing, but figures that go sometimes one way and sometimes another—it is hieroglyphics of so great and beautiful a variety that they will still please the eye when you have succeeded in making them perfectly unintelligible to the understanding. My mother is in excellent

* A celebrated Cartesian philosopher.

health—be easy on that score—she leads so quiet a life that it may possibly be tiresome. but of that we must not think. I embrace you a thousand times, my dear sweet sister; embrace your illustrious husband for me and give my love to Paulina.

LETTER CCCXXXIV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Sunday, June 12, 1689.

MY son is delighted with your letter, and do you know that I presume to admire it also. I understand it, upon my word I do, and am convinced that it is impossible to say any thing better on the terrible subject. I have long been saying in my ignorance, that surely a miracle will be required to explain that mystery according to Aristotle's philosophy, if that is the case another will be necessary for Monsieur Descartes, although there is more sense in what he says, till he touches a certain subject which concludes all. Mademoiselle Descartes will be charmed with your letter, and will keep your secret—I can answer for her. She may perhaps venture to admire your style with an agreeable Cartesian who is a friend of your brother's and worthy of being in your confidence. Be easy, my dear

child, on that head, your letter will do you honour and not occasion you any pain.

We live here in a state of tranquillity, peace, and silence, which is a perfect contrast to the manner in which you live at Avignon. You are perhaps still there—the city is gay and you will have been received with honours and acclamations. I have followed you in idea during that festival, for such will be all the time you spend there. I shall be glad to receive your first letter from Avignon—you did perfectly right in having that complaisance for M. de Grignan. When he judges so properly he must not be contradicted. You managed your plan extremely well. I pity M. de La Trousse very much. I hear he quits every thing to attend to his health. He is going to Bourbon, which is a great way from Barège, where he was advised to go. We are waiting with grief for the order which will rob us of our poor Sévigné, and make him appear at the head of his regiment of nobility—so it is called. The Duke and Duchess de Chaulnes are at Rennes—they are soon to go to St. Maloes—we shall see them when they return. The Duke concluded a marriage the other day in a manner that pleased me much—it was young du Guesclin, to a very pretty and rich girl. After he had settled the articles with much difficulty, he said, now let us make the contract—that done, what hinders us from marrying them to-morrow—every body exclaimed but the

wedding cloaths, the toilette, the linen. He laughed at all that nonsense; the Bishop of Rennes gave a dispensation, and the next day which was Sunday, the young couple were united at twelve o'clock. After dinner the little bride danced like an angel—she had learned at Paris of the master that taught the Duchess of Bourbon, and had all her graces. Next day she was Madame du Guesclin, and twenty thousand francs were saved of wedding expences. I mention this to Monsieur de Grignan that he may take the same method when he wants to conclude a marriage in his government—both the families in this business have been delighted to make such a saving. This wedding you will say is very uninteresting to you, but as I was present at it I said to myself, one day I will give the account of it to my daughter. There is sometimes a degree of good sense in being above the common trifles and customs. Adieu my dearest, I walk every day with you in idea—have you not seen me? but no doubt you are prevented by the noise and confusion of Avignon.

LETTER CCCXXXV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Wednesday, June 15, 1689.

WHAT a difference there is, my dear Countess, in the splendid, gay, and dissipated life you lead at Avignon, and the grave and solitary one we lead here; but so it should be—so Providence has ordained it, and I cannot believe whatever taste you may profess for the life of a hermit, that these distinctions and honours paid you by persons of rank and merit can be disagreeable, I should doubt it even were you to say so—for it is not natural to dislike situations that raise us above others. When I read in the life of the old Duke of Epernon his grief and lamentations at being obliged to leave his fine government of Provence—‘All those fine towns,’ says the historian, ‘so great, so considerable,’ and that Monsieur de Guise thought himself honoured and fortunate in having such a proof of his reconciliation with the King as being made Governor of such a province, and how much he valued being respected and loved there. When I read of these things, and reflect that Providence has given you that situation with all its distinctions and advantages, I really think there is little reason to say it is

the most disagreeable thing in the world—the only vexation is the derangement of your affairs, and the cruel waste of fortune that distresses you—but after all if you can preserve so fine a government for your son it will be very well worth having. You are at present at such an immense expence that if it were to last long I should say to you as I did to Madame de Chaulnes, but now it must be over. You are returned to your Castle, where, although you have but little leisure, you are not in such a dreadful whirlwind as at Avignon—had that lasted longer it would have finished you—rest is necessary every way. However if it were possible to regulate your expences in that agreeable town, and necessary that you should pass a winter in Provence, it would be pleasant to enjoy the brilliant sun shine of Avignon. I embrace you, my dearest, you have been much hurried; keep yourself quiet I entreat you—my health is perfect, but I know not what Providence has in store for me. I am reading a Treatise upon Submission to the Will of God—happy are those who love reading—present my kindest compliments to all around you.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, June 19, 1689.

I PASSIONATELY love your letters from Avignon, and read them over three or four times ; they enliven my imagination, and in the silence of these woods I fancy myself with you, and share your triumph. I entertain your company and find them as full of merit as of greatness. I enjoy with you your brilliant sun, the charming banks of the Rhone, and the mildness of your air ; but I do not play at Basset, of that I am afraid. According to my calculation you arrived at Grignan one day before the Chevalier, who was at Lyons upon the 11th ; let me know if I guess right.

June 22.

WHAT a beautiful procession* you describe in your last letter—how religious and magnificent—how well managed is the effect of the whole compared to your profanations at Aix, with their Prince of love and paste board horses. What a dif-

* The procession of the *Fete Dieu* at Avignon.

ference, and how well I can conceive the beauty of the procession accompanied with martial music—in a word, every thing pleases and interests me in the ceremony. M. de Grignan's fine figure with his Blue Ribband must have appeared to great advantage—you very justly say that the ostentation of modest persons gives no offence to the pride of others, and that it is not real ostentation or haughtiness; and the public does justice to merit. You are now at Grignan where I hope you will sleep better than at Avignon. We were much pleased with your description of the churches honoured as you say by the presence of so many Popes—the splendour of the Chapter which was with Cardinals in magnificence of dress—these are things not seen in France. As for the Penitents I am well acquainted with their maquerade, which, however, is fine; but you triumph in talking of the Jews. I feel compassion for them, and join my prayers to those of the church, that God may take off the veil which prevents their believing that Jesus Christ is come—but since they have not been convinced of that truth by the Queen and Madame de Bethune, they will certainly not be so by you. What a miserable and ridiculous representation of the admirable temple of Solomon, and of the Holy Ark so precious, so revered, and of laws so much respected. But whence arose that dreadful smell which overcame all the perfumes? doubtless it was

because incredulity and ingratitude smell ill, as virtue and faith smell sweet. The general hatred to those people is surprising. The play of Esther has however given a pleasant idea of the young Jewesses. Our Christians would have felt no aversion to them. You see, my dearest, how naturally I fall into talking over with you what you have communicated. Perhaps I tire you with the repetition, but in writing thus I renew the pleasant ideas your descriptions have excited.

I have now no thoughts of going to Nantes—my people of business are taking violent measures against those who owe me money, and I am very unfit to be present upon such an occasion. Your brother is at Rennes since yesterday; but if he were here I should only shew him some parts of your letters, therefore give me, I pray you, an account of your expences and losses at Avignon—tell me if Mademoiselle de Grignan is to be sometime at Gif. Adieu my dearest child, I embrace M. de Grignan, the Chevalier, and Paulina. Your sister-in-law sends her best love, she has the greatest attentions for me without making me feel any restraint—she allows me *holy liberty*. I enclose a note from Madame de La Fayette. You will see what Bouffleurs says of your son. I am sure Barbantane will never throw a dice box at his head in playing at Backgammon as he did to the Prince of E——s, who in return threw the candlestick at

him, and took up his sword—a violent scuffle ensued, and the Chevallier de Vasse was killed in attempting to separate them.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, June 29, 1689.

I CANNOT express to you how much I pity the Chevalier—his health has been so deplorable for some time past that neither regimen or seasons can now be depended upon. Let me know every particular concerning him; still I hope much from the change of climate, from the virtues of the waters, and more than all from your kind care and the attentions of all his family. We lead so regular a life that it is hardly possible to be ill. We rise at eight o'clock, and often I taste the morning air before nine, when we are called to mass—after that we dress and say how do you do to each other, amuse ourselves with gathering Orange flowers in the woods. We come in to dinner at twelve, then read or work till five o'clock, and since your brother has left us I read aloud to spare his wife's tender lungs. I leave her at five and saunter in my charming walks. I have a footman who follows me—I take

a book and vary my amusements with devotion and history. At eight o'clock I am recalled to the house by the supper bell, and often I am at a great distance. I meet my daughter-in-law on the lawn, and we enjoy each other's company. We sup by the twilight, and I return with her to the Orange grove, and look with a desiring eye through the handsome grated door which leads to the dark wood. I long to be there to enjoy its holy horrors but feel that it would no longer be rational. I like this kind of life better than that we spent at Rennes. I confess that I look forward, and perhaps with too much pleasure, to the time when I may pass most of my days with you. Adieu my dearest for the present, I hope you will talk to me in your next of the Chevalier and Paulina. I embrace the Count who is too much beloved.

The young Marchioness de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan.

TRULY, my dear sister, I can answer that the Count is too much beloved; I should be ashamed to say that I love his son also—it would make me blush. I only intend to desire him not to call me aunt any more as I am so small and delicate that I cannot be any thing more than a cousin. Madame de Sévigné's health does not at all resemble mine;

hers is *strong* and *perfect*. I take so much care of her that you would be almost jealous were you here. I put her under no restraint but let her stroll in her woods, with no company but books, while I with as decided a taste and as much liberty remain in the lawn in defiance of complaisance, which we take out of the catalogue of virtues the moment it deserves the name of complaisance—we allow of nothing but choice. You delight me by saying that I am a favourite with your dear mother. I have taste enough to set the highest value upon her friendship, and to feel for her the warmest affection. We have taken a lively interest in your honours and greatness, but I would not have Monsieur de Sèvigné witness them, lest they should disgust him of the quiet life he leads, from whence he is only drawn by a sort of whirlwind in this province, which will cost us five hundred pistoles to comfort myself for this misfortune. Allow me, my dear sister, to embrace you most tenderly. I dare not include M. de Grignan, having still some modesty left.

LETTER CCCXXXVIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 10, 1689.

I HAVE received no letter from you to-day, therefore must find subjects of my own to write upon. Monsieur de Seignelai is now at Brest, and I am a little angry at not knowing the reason—for one there must be. You may believe what the Chevalier says of the immense preparations that our enemies are making upon the Rhine. The Abbé Bigorre is not at all afraid of them, either for himself who is safe, or for her friends—be easy then, my dear child, and have no fears for our young Colonel, (for such the Marquis soon will be). We have had unpleasant weather which rather affects my spirits—it prevents my charming walks—but I see in Nicole's Essays, that he does not allow us to complain of the weather. As for Providence I could have no peace if I had it not continually before my eyes—it is my consolation in all the painful events of my life; it shortens my complaints, it calms my griefs, it fixes all my thoughts—that is to say, it ought to do all these things, but God knows we are seldom wise enough to make so salutary a use of that blessing—we are too easily agitated and too much af-

fected with things of this world. Those who look not up to Providence and see its dispensations in every event, are more unhappy than those who accustom themselves to the idea. Our dear Providence is now going to settle the conclusion of your law suit as it pleases best. The interest I take in the affair is in proportion to the love I bear you.

How is M. de Carcassone's silence likely to end? What has it produced? How has he decided? If he has listened to the Bise, the matter is settled since it will not have answered in an ambiguous style, but with a voice louder and plainer than all others.* I am not acquainted with the terrace which you now visit so frequently—it must be charming since sheltered from your Bise; all your views are admirable, I remember that which is seen from Mount Ventoux. I like those amphitheatres, and am of your opinion that if ever the inhabitants of the skies have the curiosity to look down upon us, they could not find a more commodious place, and you would in such a case enjoy the most magnificent sight that can be imagined. Your brother is gone to St. Maloes to see for a moment M. and Madame de Chaulnes—he will return directly to Rennes. We hope that the nobility will be sent

* The Bise being a very high wind which made an amazing noise around the Castle of Grignan.

home again—they could easily be called together again upon an emergency. Adieu my dear child.

LETTER CCCXXXIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, July 17, 1689.

THE life you lead is pleasant to think of my dearest Countess. I enliven my woods with the spirits your accounts give me. What a charming party you are—what a beautiful cheering sun—with such society it is easy to sing, ‘*Let the Bise whistle, we care not for its noise.*’ You might also bear more patiently the continuation of our rain, but it has ceased and I am resuming my dull yet agreeable walks. But, my dear child, what mean you by wishing me never to be alone? What, when I go to mass, dine, and set till five o’clock working, or conversing with my daughter-in-law, would you not allow us a few hours of freedom? She would, I believe, dislike the confinement quite as much as myself—she is a very nice little woman—we are very good friends—we both like to have our liberty and meet when we please. When I am with you, my dearest, I confess that I always leave you with concern, and entirely out of consideration for you. With other people it is in pity to myself that I quit

them—nothing is more just and natural. It is impossible to feel for two persons what I feel for you. Leave us therefore holy liberty; it suits me extremely, and with books, time passes somehow or other as quickly as in your brilliant Castle. I pity those who do not love to read. Your son is of that number so far; but I flatter myself with you, that seeing the disadvantage of ignorance, particularly to a military man who has so much to learn from the great actions of those who lived before him, he will wish to be informed, and will not be wanting in that part of a great character. Reading also I think teaches us to write. I know some General Officers whose style is quite vulgar, and surely it is a desirable thing to be able to write our thoughts in elegant language; but often indeed those who write ill, think and speak much in the same style—it is all complete—I believe the Marquis will write well. I have long been desirous of his visiting you in November, and as he will then be eighteen, we must think of getting him married. Let him give you some grand-children, and then send him off; but do not lose your time in pursuing Mademoiselle d'Or, her father is a dawdling kind of creature, whose language and bad intentions puts me out of all patience. It seems to me that the air and pleasant life of Grignan must restore the Chevalier's health. He is surrounded by all those most agreeable to him, without being importuned by those cruel

visitors—that herd of caterpillars one cannot shake off, and which gives him the gout. At Grignan he does not suffer cold, and the Bise even takes the name of *natal air* not to frighten him. In a word, I cannot comprehend the obstinacy and ill nature of his vapours, which are able to withstand so many good things, yet I find it is but too true that he is much tormented with them. I am delighted to hear that he likes Paulina, so should I; without doubt, there is something fascinating in her countenance and in her eyes—sweet eyes they are, and I fancy I see them. As for her temper I am sure it is improved—your gentleness to her and her desire of pleasing you, are sufficient for that purpose, but it was absurd to suppose that the child would be perfect when she left Aubenas—remember me affectionately to her. I mourn that Monsieur de Carcassonne has again crossed his arms and put a full stop to his building. Oh my dear Sir, let me beg you would make one effort more, and finish your work.

Rennes, July 20th

YOU will be surprised at this date, and so am I, nothing being more distant from my thoughts than leaving the Rocks where I was so comfortable; but I shall only be absent a few days. I could not resist our dear Governor's entreaties to visit them

here, where they come to see your brother at the head of his nobility. His wife, as you may suppose, was invited with me, which made me consent to the journey. I am most agreeably settled at Madame de Marbœuf's.

M. de Pommerieul is just gone from hence; he has given me much information concerning Brest, which I must repeat to you. Marshal d'Estrees had embarked on board his ship, and all his orders given. Nothing left on shore when he received an order from the King to return to Brest—his presence being necessary in so important a place. M. de Seignelai embarked in his stead, and to him is given the management of this great expedition—he waits for the Chevalier de Tourville, who is to join him—their united force will consist of sixty sail—that is all we have, and that number is greatly exceeded by the English and Dutch who are at Ouessant (Ushant) eight leagues from Belleisle, who intend to prevent the junction. You may imagine, my dear child, the importance of this affair. Monsieur de Seignelai appears to me like Bacchus, young and fortunate, going to conquer the Indies. It is said that the Pope is exceedingly ill. M. de Lavardin is arrived at Paris—he is afraid of being obliged to return, and I am afraid of something else;* but

* Meaning the loss of the income which M. de Grignan derived from Avignon.

my dearest, we must be prepared for every thing, the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away as he pleases.

Thursday.

I HAVE been received by our good Governors with open arms. We supped last night at M. Pommerieul, with some ladies, Revel, and other men. We dine there to-day. Madame de Chaulnes tells me you do not wish me to be at the Rocks; be assured, however, that except in winter, nothing is more agreeable to me or good for my health. Here I am every way deranged—so much noise and company fatigues and disturbs me. It is not this sort of bustle that I like; I must have that which the Hotel de Carnavalet, or the Castle of Grignan, affords—shall I ever be happy enough to enjoy that sort of pleasing confusion? I wish it ardently. The Duchess sends a hundred kind speeches to you. The Duke told me of a number of jokes he had written to you; whether good or bad I entreat you to answer them. You love me too well not to assist me in repaying the favours these good friends lavish upon me. M. de Chaulnes is much pleased with what he has written to you—something concerning ‘A Journey to Rome, a Visit to Grignan, the King of Spain’—but I was dying with heat and did not hear half he said.

I entreat you to embrace Paulina for me, she is often obliged to me for that favour; love her on my word. I am completely yours my dear child.

LETTER CCCXL.

To the same.

Rennes, July 24, 1689.

OUR good Governors express the greatest gratitude at my having quitted the Rocks to visit them. The Duke has received the Regiment of Nobility, which is really a fine one. Your brother heard the praises bestowed upon his skill with a sort of pleasure which gratified me much. I could not help reflecting that it was not for such a situation that I had brought him up, introduced him at Court, and done every thing to promote his success, but submission to that Providence, for which I have so high a respect, reconciles me to this; otherwise there would be no end of retrospect, which like a twisted skaine, it is hardiy possible to unravel. From these thoughts I derive fortitude—may Heaven preserve me from whatever could destroy such comforting philosophy. Apropos, I received yesterday a visit from three very agreeable women,

great nieces to M. Descartes. Their aunt has not said a word to them of your letter which must convince you of her discretion. They told me many things they had heard from their uncle's mouth, which would entertain you much, but I keep them for the Rocks. We have here a Monsieur de Ganges, who quite adores M. de Grignan, consequently he is my best friend—his regiment is in this part of the world. I wish you could imagine the value I set upon a man who comes from Languedoc, knows all the Grignans, and is a particular friend of the dear Count's.

We made that strange creature, the son of the Senechal de Rennes, who has had so many adventures, dance the other day. He is very handsome, and only twenty years of age—he married in a violent hurry the daughter of a President, because she became with child with only looking at him, consequently the match was concluded, and she produced a babe six weeks after. She is here and thinks it is sufficient to look at her husband, not to blame her, and certainly when you see him dance you are tempted to be of her opinion. Imagine to yourself the finest figure in the world, a face of romantic beauty, a style of dancing as elegant and graceful as Pécour, Favier, and St. Andrie*. All those masters have declared to him that he dances

* The three most famous Opera dancers of that time.

better than they do, consequently they can teach him nothing. He treated us with all the fashionable dances, and performed with his wife, *passe pieds*, in the highest perfection. He does not confine himself to particular steps, but varies continually, and always in exact time—sometimes resting himself in a minuet step, othertimes scarcely touching the ground. I assure you, my dear child, that as a connoisseur you would have been much pleased with the charm attached to this dancing which was a kind of ball in itself. Madame de Chaulnes, who has been a great performer in her time, was quite transported, and declared she had never seen any thing like it. I had a gentleman near me who has much wit. We amused ourselves with excusing the young woman's imprudence, and expatiating upon the perfection this couple can boast of in dancing.

Have you perfectly understood how very unpleasant Marshal d'Etrees situation is? He was already as far as Conquet.* M. de Seignelai is now in his place, and the Marshal returned to Brest—the enemy have sixty eight ships off Ushant. The Chevalier de Tourville is expected to join our fleet, which will make it as strong. It is thought that the wind which brings the ships from the Levant, will be contrary to those that are at Ushant; therefore

* A small maritime town fifteen miles from Brest.

we found our hopes as usual upon the King's good luck. Our Governors send you a thousand kind compliments. Our manner of life here sometimes makes me fancy I am at Avignon with you—two sumptuous tables twice a day, and a Basset table, without which the company cannot exist. The face of the country is indeed very different. Madame de Chaulnes has seen Avignon, and was as much fascinated with it as you are, and could scarcely be persuaded to quit it. She was received there as the wife of the Ambassador—she can judge of the charm of that residence—long may you possess your situation there.

We shall all part in three or four days—rejoice at it, my dearest, for this sort of life worries me exceedingly. I am too much attended to—it is impossible to be concealed a moment, and that is killing. Every creature that goes to the Duchess comes also here—I have not a moment to myself—so much company heats me. Do not, I pray you, desire them to draw me from my retreat; I shall soon be ill if I continue this life. The Rocks afford a tranquillity which is alone likely to preserve to you your poor mother, and give her a chance of seeing you again. The regiment is not yet to separate, consequently your brother will not return with us. I was tempted to say when I saw him the other day looking extremely well at the head of

his troops, as Baptiste* said of a favourite air which he made for the Opera, and which was sung at mass, 'Pardon me O Lord, I did not compose it for you.' I could exclaim 'Gentlemen, I did not bring him into the world for you.'

You say nothing of the Chevalier's health. I once told him that little story of Baptiste. Adieu my dearest, you know how tenderly I love you; but good God how simple, how common is such a phrase to express a sentiment so very rare and uncommon.

LETTER CCCXLI.

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To the same.

Rennes. Monday, July 25, 1689.

I SHALL set out to morrow at break of day with Monsieur and Madame de Chaulnes to make an excursion of a fortnight. This is how it happened; the Duke said to me the other day, 'My dear Madam, you ought to go with us to Vannes to visit the First President; he has been extremely civil to you since you are in Brittany, and such a compli-

* Baptiste Lully, the famous French Composer.

ment is expected from a woman of quality.' I did not enter into that necessity, and answered 'My dear Sir, I long most ardently to return to the Rocks to seek rest which is very necessary after the dissipation of this place, and which you alone could have made me quit.' There the matter rested—the next day Madame de Chaulnes said to me at table, in a low voice, 'My dear Governess, you ought to come with us, there is only one day's journey from hence to Vannes—sometime perhaps you may want the assistance of the President. We will go together afterwards to Auray, which is only nine miles further. We shall not be overwhelmed with company, and shall return in a fortnight.' To this I answered with rather too much bluntness, 'My dear Madam, you do not want me. You propose this out of kindness—I know of no reason in the world to make me court the President—I must go to my solitude which is absolutely necessary to my health.' Madame de Chaulnes left me rather coldly; instantly it occurred to me that I was wrong—how could I think of refusing such a trifle to people who have loaded me with kindness and attentions. I make use of their carriage and of themselves when it suits me, and I object to taking a little journey when they ask it, and when my company might perhaps be agreeable to them—they who can chuse among their friends ask it of me as a favour with timidity and politeness, and I with a competent

share of health, and no good reason to offer, refuse them. All this passed through my brain in a moment, I saw my error, and drawing near the Duchess, I said, 'My dear Madam, at the first moment of your proposal I thought only of myself, and was not much charmed with the idea of visiting the First President, but if I may flatter myself that you wish for my company, and that my going would give you pleasure I am ready to accompany you.' She coloured and answered, 'Can you doubt it?' 'That is enough,' said I, 'depend upon my being of your party.' She seemed much pleased and embraced me affectionately, rose from table, and said to the Duke, 'She will go with us.' He answered, 'She refused me, but I thought you would prevail.' In a word, my dear child, I shall go, you would have advised it, and your brother is much pleased with my determination.

LETTER CCCXLII.

To the same.

Auray, Saturday, July 30, 1689.

SEE, my dear child, to what a distance I am removed here on the Southern Coast and near the sea. Where is that happy time when we were together in our little library at Paris close to each other? we must hope that such hours will come again. In the meantime Providence has cast my lot in this part of the world. I wrote to you from Rennes my thoughts upon this journey. We sat out on Tuesday—nothing can exceed the friendship and attentions of Madame de Chaulnes—her principal business is to prevent my feeling any inconvenience. She comes herself to see I have a nice apartment, and as for the Duke he sits by me at table, and I hear him saying in a half whisper, ‘No, my dear Madam, it will not hurt her, see how well she looks; here is an excellent melon, do not suppose that Brittany is without them—she must eat a small piece; and when I ask him what he is muttering it appears that he is answering you. This droll fancy is not yet worn out, and has made us laugh two or three times. We came in three days to Vannes, which is not above twenty miles each day. This

makes travelling both easy and comfortable, finding every where dinners and suppers prepared for us, and all excellent; at every stage receiving the compliments of the different communities and corporations, and accompanied by all the fifes and drums which follow your Excellencies, besides troops, officers, and reviewing regiments, which give a fine representation of war. The regiment of Carman is remarkably good; they are all from Lower Brittany, tall and better made than the others, do not understand a word of French, except the necessary words by which to learn the exercise. This they perform as easily as if they were dancing—it is a pleasure to see them. I imagine it was of them that Bertrand du Gueslin meant to speak, when he said he was invincible at the head of his Bretons. In one coach went Monsieur and Madame de Chaulnes, Revel, and myself. One day I made Revel tell us every thing that past in Savoy, a subject on which there is much to say. Another day we made him talk of Madame de R——, whose follies and violent passions are inconceivable. Sometimes we put him upon the passage of the Rhine—this we call discussing our subjects one after the other. We arrived at Vannes, Thursday night, and were received at the Bishop's palace—he is the son of Monsieur d'Argouges. This is a noble house, elegantly furnished, and every way a most agreeable residence. We had one of those magnificent suppers at which

one may die of hunger. I said to Revel I am exceedingly hungry. They gave me a partridge when I wished for veal, and a pigeon when I wanted to taste the excellent fowls of Rennes. In short, I repeat it, if you say you will eat as much as they please being no longer hungry, I say I should eat very heartily if there was nothing on the table. I must however use myself to this torment. Monsieur de la Faluere paid me a thousand civilities, more than I can express. He was continually looking at me and exclaiming is this really Madame de Sévigné? Can it be her? Yesterday, which was Friday, he gave us a dinner, all of fish; we saw every thing the sea could produce, and good cooking improve—this is the country for feasting. I conversed a good deal with the President. He told me honestly that he disapproved of the chicane we had met with, having heard that we had won our cause in the other Court with one voice, he was convinced that justice and reason were on our side. I told him the particulars of our last victory, and I assure you he was not tired of listening to me—his wife is at Paris. At dinner they made the wine of St. Laurent sparkle, and between M. and Madame de Chaulnes, the Bishop of Vannes, and I, your health was drank, and that of Monsieur de Grignan, Governor of that delicious nectar. In a word, my dear, you were talked of at the extremity of the world. We saw a very pretty girl who might shine

at Versailles, but she is going to marry a M. de Quereguesnied, whose establishment is very near Conquet, * but alas very far from Trianon †. Monsieur de Revel is gone this morning to see Brest which is now the finest place in the world. He will see Monsieur de Seignelai on board his ship, and Marshal d'Estrees in the market place at Brest. He will admire a naval armament which is in the first style, and will share the public impatience for the arrival of the Chevalier de Tourville. He will learn the exact number of ships which our enemies have at Ushant, and will return in four days, his curiosity satisfied, and willing to impart to us what he has seen, it will be another subject to discuss.

Madame de Chaulnes has just left me, she is going to write to you—besides the pleasure my acceptance gave her, she has that of fancying she is relieving you from great anxiety by taking me from the Rocks, which you have represented in a very different light from that which they deserve. The air which you persist in thinking bad is very good; it is a spot which pleases me. The walks are agreeable, and the sort of life which is led there, suits and delights me. Some pains and sufferings have

* Le Conquet is situated at the furthest extremity of Brittany, and that spot is called the World's End. It is a sea port.

† Near Paris.

attacked me at the Rocks—no doubt but I should have been worse any where else. The Duchess never ceases telling me how happy the handsome Countess will be, that she has seduced me from the bad air of the Rocks—that once said, is said for ever. In short, my dear child, it is you who are the cause of my taking this excursion. Providence will have it so, and I make up my mind to it because I have an easy temper, and that I ought and do love M. and Madame de Chaulnes—but when it pleases God that I should return to those Rocks you so unjustly abuse, I can assure you it will give me very great pleasure.

Let me know if in Provence the Parliament pays the same compliment to the Lieutenant General as to the Governor, and if two Presidents and six counsellors, go to meet Monsieur de Grignan three leagues from Aix, when he is expected there. Here, the First President goes to the Governor's house as soon as he is arrived with another President and six counsellors, and then the Governor returns the visit. I have met at Vannes with many of my old Parliament friends. It is impossible to receive more civilities than I do from every body. I meet every where nephews of the great Descartes.

I have just received your letter of the 19th; being with the Governor is very convenient—they send a messenger and have their letters sooner than other

people. I am delighted with yours—it is excellent, full of the remembrance and writing of all the Grignans, whom I love and honour extremely, as you well know.

LETTER CCCXLIII.

To the same.

Auray, Tuesday, August 2, 1689.

WHILE I am expecting your letter, I begin a little chat with you. M. de Chaulnes repents exceedingly having mentioned to you a journey to Rome, and the intention of making peace with the Pope. He did not know how advantageous the quarrel is to you. He is happy to hear the situation of affairs, enters into all your sentiments, and says no prayer but yours, *God preserve the Pope.*

He assures me you are his good genius, that he talks to you continually, and hears your answers. The other day he said to me ‘Why do you put your hand to your head, my dear mother? Have you any pain there?’ I understood him and answered ‘No, my daughter, not in the least.’ This makes a good jest between us, and is a continual

remembrance of the love you bear me. I think my dear child, that while you jest with the Duke upon this genius which speaks to him so often, you might ask him if it does not say something of the deputation for your brother which you have much at heart, because this is exactly the year when he can render him that service—your pen will manage this much better than I can. I am convinced that sort of solicitation will have a good effect—to say the truth it is entirely in the Duke's power. If he is master, and the nobility of Brittany are allowed any influence (which ought to be the case) and no courtier admitted to interfere, the deputation falls at once to my son. Nothing can exceed the attention these good Governors pay to my health, nor the marks of esteem and distinction with which they load me—I sometimes feel quite embarrassed. The fortunate arrival of the Chevalier at Brest will make us return directly to Rennes, and then to the Rocks. I own that I wish it ardently, and that if my health was not invulnerable it would suffer a good deal from this agitated life. You must after having been afraid of the solitude of the Rocks, and having been the cause of their dragging me from it, you must also occasion my being allowed to remain there during the rest of the summer—it is the finest time of the year to enjoy those woods which I probably see for the last time. Touch upon this however only in a laughing way, and dwell par-

ticularly on the gratitude you feel for the Duke and Duchess's kindness to me. I admire that although you are six hundred miles from me you still govern my motions—but no more of Brittany, let me talk of Grignan, of those brothers who always return to the Castle of their forefathers. I was surprised that Carcassonne ever quitted it—his anger was childish and made him say things only worthy of the Marquis. What name do you give them my dear child? *Effervescences* of temper, is it not? that is a phrase I never heard before—but it came from your father Descartes, and I must repeat it on your account—one sees nothing but his nephews and nieces here—all of them polite and amiable. This temper then, so full of *effervescence*, is not obstinate, it allows reason to return; and the same man who called his brother an enemy, now wants to take him to Balaruc, and be at as much expence for him as would have built all that is wanting to his Castle, but now he is where he should be, let him like his situation and remain there—above all things let him follow his brother's advice, that is the most essential point. I shall then believe that his affection is returned with his reason. I pay no attention to those flights of friendship which do no good to those they love.

What does your husband say to the King's good fortune, that great affair which fixed the attention of all Europe? those two and twenty ships com-

manded by the Chevalier de Tourville, all entered the Port of Brest on the 30th of July without having seen a Dutch ship—that great armament which was to have prevented the junction has disappeared; no one can tell what is become of it. For my part I am tempted to believe it has formed itself into one of those heavy clouds which are seen in the sky. Adieu my dearest, the post is going out and I must finish.

LETTER CCCXLIV.

To the same.

Auray, August 13, 1689.

THE packet which I thought lost is at length arrived; well might I regret it since it contains all the particulars that interest me most. I should be sorry not to know how many hotels you build and what names you give them.

We shall be on Tuesday at Rennes; our return is hastened a few days as M. de Chaulnes has received orders which call him to Paris—they are said to be upon affairs of state. At all events he sets off immediately. I shall acquaint you with my destiny and the day on which I return to my tranquil woods. Your brother and his wife are at Rennes. We

have made a very pleasant excursion these three days past to Port Louis, which is a noble place. You know the situation—the finest view of the sea always before our eyes. If by chance they were turned aside we might see the horrid countenance of Duke Mazarin. * Among all the places where he might command he chuses the only one where he is not master. His son commands at Port Louis, but it is impossible to find a good reason for any of that man's actions. He is mad, he dresses like a beggar, his devotion is as absurd as every thing else. We tried to persuade him to recall his wife from England where she is in danger of being sent away, or perhaps perverted, and where she is living with the enemies of her country—but he always says the same thing, 'Let her come and live with me.' With him, good Heaven! well may we say with St. Evremond, that she is dispensed from the common rules, and that we see her justification in seeing Monsieur de Mazarin.

We went on the Thursday to L'Orient, a place which advances three miles into the sea, where all the merchandize is deposited that comes from the East. There we saw a M. de Bret, who is just come from Siam, and who has the care of this branch of

* Married to Hortense Mancini, Niece to Cardinal Mazarin; she was the greatest beauty of her time. See her history in the *Memoires de St. Evremond*.

trade. His wife had lately returned from Paris, her dress was as magnificent as any at Versailles—they gave us a good dinner. We made the husband tell us the history of his voyage, which we found amusing. They treated us with the sight of a great deal of china, silks, and other merchandize, curious enough. If you were not the Queen of the Mediterranean I should have looked out for a pretty silk to send you, but situated as you are, it would be an affront. We returned at night with the tide and slept at Hennebon—the map will shew you our situation. The weather was beautiful—it was on leaving the town that we met the courier of whom you will hear more by and by. I perfectly comprehend the comfort you feel in sending the remittances from Avignon to Paris—such an act of justice ought to lengthen the Pope's life. I tremble at the arrival of every courier. If Providence would but allow his Holiness to live some years more the favour would be complete. Adieu my dearest, I am hurried and surrounded by noise—I shall write from Rennes.

LETTER CCCXLV.

To the same.

Rennes, August 17, 1689.

I HAVE now, my dear child, many things to tell you, and much to answer to your letters; but first I shall resume the story of the courier who came to meet M. de Chaulnes at Hennebon. He was the bearer of a letter from the King which I have seen full of all these civil things that make a man obey with alacrity, and see nothing impossible. We easily discovered M. de Louvois's decisive style, who never asks whether the Duke can take a journey to Rome, but desires him to set out; will neither admit of excuse or delay—he foresees every thing and removes every difficulty. The King says ‘That he is resolved to send M. de Chaulnes Ambassador to Rome, because he is the only man he thinks capable of conducting the greatest affair in Europe, namely, that of giving a head to the church. This determination is in consequence of the bad state of the present Pope’s health, that his Majesty does not mean to detain Monsieur de Chaulnes longer than is necessary at Rome, but will allow him to return as soon as the new Pope is elected, &c. &c.’

The Duke was sometime divided between the pleasure which such a preference gave him, and the regret of leaving the States where he has a great deal of business to transact for the King's service. As for the Duchess she weeps immoderately, is distressed at the thoughts of a long absence, a long journey, and fears lest the fatigue should be too much for a man who is far from young. These considerations overbalance all ideas of the expence they must be at, which will be extremely inconvenient. She only laments the fatigue her husband must undergo.

We all arrived here on Monday—the better day the better deed. I attempted during the journey to set before Madame de Chaulnes the bright side of her husband's situation, dwelling upon the flattering circumstance of being chosen in preference to every body. I made the disadvantages appear light in the scale, and I succeeded. We made the Duke give us an account of his other visits to Rome. He has evidently so much good sense and talent for negotiating in that country where he is adored, that we must approve of his Majesty's choice. He desired me to tell you that if he was going to make peace with the Pope, he would have refused, knowing how much it would injure you; but he begs you would consider that he will only begin to do you mischief when death has done as much to the Pope. The Duke hopes to see you on his road.

The Duchess will follow her husband to Paris in a day or two—she wants me to go with her and is sure that you would approve—she is really sorry to part with me. We were remarking how Providence changes the plans of mortals. We both intended to spend the winter in Brittany. I was to return to the Rocks for a month, and had promised to be at St. Maloes the beginning of October, then at the States—in short, from one to the other till after Easter. Instead of this, in four days the good Governors will have left the province, and I shall go to the Rocks with your brother and his wife, and certainly pass the winter there more agreeably than in any other place without the Duke and Duchess. I am convinced that when M. de Chaulnes mentions Brittany to the King, he will propose giving the deputation to your brother. I cannot believe that it will be refused. I know the Duke wishes to do us this favour and likes to surprise us agreeably.

LETTER CCCXLVI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 21, 1689.

HERE am I once more returned to the solitude which you dread so much for me, and which is by no means formidable—no longer are the Duke and Duchess to be found in this province. We parted with infinite regret—they wished to take me to Paris, but my visit here would be perfectly useless if I staid so short a time. On such an occasion ‘Friendship says Paris, but Reason says Brittany.’ In a word, my dear child, the sacrifice is made; it cost me some tears to part with Madame de Chaulnes. She would not however let me take leave of her, but I was awake when she departed and much affected, knowing as I do, that all the honours and advantages of this embassy do not prevent her feeling the greatest anxiety, lest a long journey should prove fatal to her husband. He has indeed been twice to Rome, but he was three and twenty years younger the last visit he made there. I assure you she is with all that indifference in her manner, a woman of great feeling and warm affections. Thus did I see nothing but tears and hear nothing but sighs on Friday at Rennes, and all

the evening she spent here. When once she is at Paris, business, and the company of her friends, will in some measure dissipate her grief, but here she was very unhappy.

Do not imagine that I shall turn hermit here—your brother would effectually prevent such a misfortune, and the number of people who visit him but too much intrude upon my solitude. The weather is beautiful; I am going to resume my favourite mode of life, my readings, and my walks, but no attempt to venture in the dews of the evening, therefore be easy about your poor mother, and take care of yourself for her sake. I congratulate the Chevalier upon M. de Beauvillier's* new dignity. The King has made three Governors out of one—Saint Lewis could not have chosen better. The Abbè Fenelon is a man of great wit and understanding, and uncommon piety. I rejoice with the Chevalier at this choice—I suppose him at Balaruc. Are the waters still useful to Paulina's complaint, and do the party which you call the East India Company, still play with their usual success? I shall be delighted to have Paulina's picture. I beg you would bring it with you that I may admire it—I can

* M. de Beauvilliers was appointed Governor to the Dauphin's three sons. The Abbe Fenelon, afterwards Archbishop of Cambray, and author of *Telemachus*, was tutor to the Princes.

fancy her face. I put a little of the Count de Chappelle's countenance, and a handsome likeness of the Grignans together, and of that I compose a very pretty girl, whose air is noble, and who has wit and good sense. I love her tenderly and embrace her with my whole heart.

I ardently wish to hear that M. de Grignan's complaint has left him—your anxiety I know must be great; it is wonderful that your health can sustain it.

August 28.

I HAVE had a letter from your son; the amiable little Captain tells me it is an age since he has written to me. He mentions the news of his camp and the hopes the whole regiment entertain of finishing the campaign by being joined to the main army. His style begins to be formed, and there is good sense in every part of his letter. I repeat as usual, God preserve him; but my dear child, it has not pleased Providence to preserve the Pope whose life was so necessary to your interest and comfort. That income from Avignon that was so useful will now disappear. In this affair I consult only your interest, and set aside Europe and its politics. Monsieur de Chaulnes arrived on Sunday at Versailles. I hear from Paris that he was very well received by every body. The King having set the

example I know not if he will have time to talk of the deputation, but I know it was his intention. Coulanges goes to Rome with him—he writes me a long adieu and mentions you much in his letter. Make my compliments to your circle wherever you think they will be acceptable. I embrace M. de Grignan most tenderly, and wish him perfect health. What is there good that I do not wish you my dear child? The abundance of my wishes quite bewilders me. I am not less frightened than you at our long separation, but Providence and our affairs wills it so. With my son, with his wife, and in a house that is agreeable to me I cannot be unhappy. Company at times, books, and conversation fill up a great space. Adieu my dearest.

LETTER CCCXLVII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, August 13, 1689.

I THINK nothing can be more noble than the style of your house. The two tables served up at the same moment give me a great idea of Flame; he must be a second Honoré—but that magnificence is ruinous. It is by no means a matter of little

consequence to live in that style; the expence is immense. You remind me of our good Abbé de Pontcarré when you talk of Champigni, who I believe was related to him—but he did not eat so much. Our Abbé shone only at table. I used to say of the late Bishop of Rennes that he marked the leaves of his Breviary with slices of ham, nor did the Bishop of Valence dislike that kind of mark. The light of the gospel shone in his countenance. The Bishop after twelve o'clock always refused to hear a word on business.

M. de Grignan would be very glad to see his friend Canaples in his Castle. He goes it seems to drink the waters of Vals because he lives at Paris, as M. d'Arles goes to Forges because he resides in the neighbourhood of Vals. So true it is that even of Fountains we may say, that none are prophets in their own country. But to return to the good de Chaulnes—he arrived on the 21st at Versailles. The King sent for him before he could change his dress and conversed with him for half an hour in his closet. You may imagine after that, how much the courtiers embraced and flattered him. The Duke sat out on the 27th; he will sail up your beautiful Rhone—you might see him with the aid of a good telescope.

I scarcely know what to say to you of our fleets, since the assistance you sent us from your part of the world, and since the enemy is at sea we have

heard nothing. A man of wit was saying the other day at Rennes, that since the battle of Actium he had never heard of a complete victory at sea—that all the engagements now consist in firing guns, in dispersing ships that are supposed to be sunk, but which appear again at the end of a month—this seems to us to be the truth.

I must say a word of Paulina—was I not right when I foresaw that her desire of pleasing you would render her amiable—it was not proper to manage her with severity. You see the good effect that gentleness has had upon her—I rejoice at it exceedingly both for her sake and yours. You will love this dear girl and make her an amusing companion. Adieu my dearest, I love you for many reasons; but above all because you love me—that is the first of reasons and makes me all your own.

LETTER CCCXLVIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 14, 1689.

IT is a real vexation to me when any of your letters are strayed or delayed; it makes me lose the thread of a conversation which is always connected, and is both my delight and amusement. Our good Duke de Chaulnes has then visited you at Grignan. Your Castle has so noble an appearance, is so well furnished, your Chapter is so handsome, and your terrace so grand and elevated beyond all others, that the Duke will easily understand that the Bise is not always in the humour to let those heights defy its power. You will let me know how the visit went off. I am convinced that you will have given him the best of receptions in spite of the mischief he is going to do to you, you will have talked together of your poor mother, and he will explain to you what he did in respect to the deputation. We are quite in the dark upon the subject—since what the Duke said to M. de Lavaradin there has been a sort of unaccountable silence, that we do not understand, or rather are afraid of enquiring into, but I have not the least doubt of the Duke's good intentions, and still less of his wife's

anxious desire that they may take effect. The Parliament is now returned to Rennes—the joy of the people amounts to transport. The city gives the King 500,000 livres.

As to our affair I can only say that we are not fortunate—every thing has coincided to destroy our hopes. A chain of unforeseen circumstances has occasioned events of which you form the same opinion as myself—but do not, my dear child, be more vexed than we are—we have a sufficient degree of fortitude to bear this disappointment—these are not the things that strike at the heart. Your brother will comfort himself by not accepting the *Arriere Ban** which was offered him as a compensation for the expence the regiment of Nobility occasioned; but enough upon this subject—I admire how my pen runs on. I have written to Madame de La Fayette that her son should tremble at marrying Mademoiselle de Martillac, with whom our Marquis was in love. It is a very proper marriage and much approved of. His mother settles all her fortune upon her son and his wife, and will only reserve a part of the income to live upon. She is well pleased and the marriage will take place as soon as the campaign is over.

M. d'Arles has written to me a very tender letter;

* A militia, raised by a proclamation, called the *Arriere Ban*.

he is pleased with Forges; he tells me Madame de Vins has gained her law suit. Your brother saw at Rennes M. de Pommerieul's beautiful daughter-in-law, but she stammers to such a degree that she cannot pronounce three words together. We must say with Moliere, who is the fool of a husband that would be sorry if his wife was dumb? * You see I am never to be stopped when once I begin writing, but I must say that I am very sorry to hear that your farmers begin to pay as ill as ours—that joined to the loss you make at Avignon will be distressing, but not a word on that subject, or on the ravages which time makes in our persons, and at last upon our lives. I ought to have concluded in a more lively strain, but I cannot help it—*dixi*.

* See the 6th scene of the second act in Moliere's *Médecin malgré lui*.

LETTER CCCXLIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 18, 1689.

I HAVE at length received your letter of the first September; it went to Rennes, a journey which my letters often take. I should have been very sorry to lose a letter which continued our chain of conversation, and acquainted me with the particulars of M. de Chaulne's visit, and with the magnificent and friendly reception you gave him. I wished you to be seen in all your glory, at least that of your country residence, for at Aix you have still more splendour. I wanted the Duke to eat something more than a chicken and Ommelette at your house. Now he knows what you can do, you may hereafter receive him at Paris as you please. He has seen the fast, and the feast day, the mutton, and the pigeon. Coulanges seems to have acted his part amazingly well—he does not yet begin to break. I dread that time for him whose vivacity makes so great a part of his merit. I have had a letter from M. de Chaulnes which I enclose. You will see how pleased he is with you all, and with the manner in which you do the honours of your house. He made me laugh with his story of your Genii. Mine did

not appear at Grignan, you had more agreeable spirits to talk to. Coulanges it seems jumped upon his chair to drink my health. It was a dangerous leap for a little man as round as a ball. I rejoice that he met with no accident in my service. I long to receive a letter from him. You are very generous as you observe in giving such a reception to M. de Chaulnes, who is going to do you such an injury. I am sure he is very sorry to be obliged to hurt you. Madame de Chaulnes writes to me that it is thought there will be great difficulties in the Conclave, and afterwards on the cruel affair of Avignon, I say so much the better.

'Rome will at least be surrendered somewhat later.' We shall preserve the agreeable income while the Holy Ghost is chusing a Pope, and other affairs are negotiating—your simile is just. Avignon resembles the ball night at the Louvre, when you appeared radiant with diamonds, which were to be returned the next day; but what remained with you at that time, was far better than the jewels, since it was your natural charms, but not so will it be with the income from Avignon, nothing so good remains when that is gone. Nothing however like want of money was seen at Grignan when you received the Duke. I know not by what miracle you are able to run without legs. I pray to God that it may last.

Your dear son is quite well—you know he was.

every where sword in hand with Marshal Bouffleurs. Mayence* has surrendered—that news has surprised us. We were so much rejoiced at the siege that I was tempted to laugh at the Duke de Lorraine's efforts. It is said that the Marquis d'Huxelles will leave the town, esteemed both by friends and foes. I tremble lest the brother of the Dean is among the number of dead or wounded—none of his brave brothers have lived to be old. He is convinced of it, and if one may judge by the quick and easy manner with which he understood the hint M. Prut gave him, he is accustomed to such news. I am uneasy for poor Martillac—what can a man with one leg do in a city taken by assault? In that riot and confusion, what a scene; I really am anxious to know him safe. I pity M. de La Trousse—we said when we saw him embellishing his estate, that the worst that could happen to him would be to enjoy the improvements he had made at so great an expence—alas we prophesied but too well.

Do you wish to know how we spend our time? Thus it is—we rise at eight o'clock, say mass at nine—the weather decides whether we walk out or not (often separately) we eat a hearty dinner, a

* Madame de Sevigne knew that Mentz had capitulated, and that Prince Charles of Lorraine had given M. d'Huxelles his own terms, but she meant to speak of the attack of the covered way which was very bloody.

neighbour comes in, we talk of the news, we work in the afternoon—my daughter-in-law at a hundred different things, and I at two pieces of tapestry which Madame de Carman gave me at Chaulnes. At five o'clock we part, and walk either alone or in a party—we rendezvous at a beautiful spot. I take a book, say my prayers, think of my dear daughter, build castles in the air, but mostly in Provence—they are sometimes gay, sometimes dull. Your brother reads good and entertaining books to us—some of devotion, others of history—this both amuses and occupies us. We reason upon what we have read—your brother is indefatigable, he would read five hours together. Receiving letters and answering them, fills up a great deal of our time, of mine at least. We have had company in the house and shall have more, but that is not what we wish for, yet when they come we are glad to see them. My son has many workmen busy—he is *beautifying* (as they call it here) his long walks. In short, my dear child, it is a strange thing that this life so insipid and almost dull, should pass so rapidly, and escape us. God knows what escapes at the same time—but *we must not talk of that*—yet I think of it often, and so I ought. We sup at eight o'clock. Sévigné reads after supper generally amusing books for fear we should grow sleepy. They retire at ten o'clock, but I seldom go to bed till twelve—these are nearly the rules of our convent. We write

upon the door *holy liberty, or do as you please*. I like this life fifty times better than that of Rennes. It will be time enough to go there in Lent, for the benefit of both soul and body.

Duplessis writes me that his chimera is only peeping out, but that he is married to a charming woman, exactly according to his taste, very clever, with beauty, birth, and fortune enough to make him happy for life. Of this you make me doubt—he seems still however to attend to Madame de Vin's advice—these are his words—‘I love this wife much better than I did my last.’ Does that accord with the grief he displayed for her loss? Do you remember it?

LETTER CCCL.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Wednesday, September 21, 1689.

NOT only, my dear child, do I read your letters the first time with pleasure, but I also read them over very often, and with sensations so tender that such an occupation makes me love my solitary walks. Your letters are much more charming and well written than you imagine, and you are

not a judge of the excellence of your style, or the turn of your expressions. I must tell you, my dear Countess, that after so many, such repeated professions of friendship, M. de Chaulnes forgot us a little when he was at Paris. He received your letter at Versailles—it might have awakened him, yet in a week's residence there, and three conferences with the King, he could not find one moment to say a word in your brother's favour, nor even to M. de Croissi. He contented himself with saying what I told you to M. de Lavardin, and the next day Marshal d'Estree's complaints prevailed, and all was changed, therefore what the Duke said made no impression. Madame de Chaulnes is to speak of it to M. de Croissi, but it will certainly be rather too late—there are people who do not sleep upon such occasions. This is the situation of affairs at present; if it depended upon Marshal d'Estrees, we might be sure of success. Madame de La Fayette wrote him two letters, and such strong ones, that his support is certain. She has really done wonders, and we are waiting as quietly as we can to see the issue of her zeal. We suffer less from the loss of the deputation than from the apparent coldness and silence of the Duke whose friendly expressions to me and my son, had firmly persuaded us and the whole province, that he meant to distinguish us from the rest. This between ourselves is what vexes and surprises us exceedingly. When we compare what

has happened since their departure with what preceded it, we are quite lost in amazement, and cannot comprehend the horrid difference. We believe it to be a dream, but one of those disagreeable ones from which we feel very glad to be awakened. We shall let you know how it all ends—but be assured we are perfectly satisfied with the Marshal d'Etrees's behaviour. He has written to us (without Madame de La Fayette's knowledge) the kindest letter imaginable. As for M. de Lavardin, he certainly lost a pleasant situation in losing the Presidency of the States, but it would have been depriving the Marshal of the best feather in his cap, and the King can comfort M. de Lavardin whenever he pleases. What say you to Mayence? The Marquis d'Huxelles wanted powder and muskets—it appeared to us that his succours were very long delayed—in short, God chose it should be so, as he chose to preserve your son in health and safety, he has written me a very pretty letter, that dear little Marquis, he jests with me, and calls my daughter-in-law his cousin—he says they have as yet done nothing; speaks highly of Marshal Bouffleurs. In a word, it is impossible to answer our wishes as to boldness and valour better than he does—God preserve him. Coulanges seems enchanted with your magnificence and elegance, and with Paulina. You are very wicked, still pretending that it was by force that he made himself so agreeable, but I be-

lieve that without being a Duke or Duchess, there was splendour enough in your Castle to make him happy and amusing. You had excellent company and an absolute Court—nothing could be added to the reception you gave. Your Monsieur Rousseau is a madman with his Madame de la Riviere, who talks of ascending the heavens as a luminary. Those are their common and uncommon dreams, by which they have been in danger of much embarrassment since they took the phantoms of their imagination for absolute realities. As for me I do not dream when I say again that one of my letters to you is either strayed or lost. I could not be from the 17th to the 24th without writing to my dear daughter. You praise Revel much in the same manner I do when I say he tells truth and banishes vanity, so much so, that after giving me an account of the Passage of the Rhine, and the battle of Senef, and other particulars of his campaigns—I did not discover whether he deserved praise or blame. He told us he had fallen into the Rhine, had been dragged out by the hair of his head, that his horse fell into a hole; in short, he related all this in such an odd manner, that I thought he was half drowned; however it seems he jumped upon another horse quite wet as he was, and very cleverly flew to attack the enemy and disengage the Prince of Condé who was wounded. Still however I wanted the Chevalier's decision—it is law and gospel to me. I

am obliged in justice to say (to give the finishing stroke to Revel's praise) that he did not speak with the same negligence of the battle of Altenheim, and of the Chevalier's reputation.*

Monsieur de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan.

I HAD however assured my mother that Revel was esteemed a man of great worth and courage, but that was a trifling sentence from a second rate judge, compared to the decision which the great Chief, the Chevalier, pronounced. I must now tell you my sensations as to the affair of the deputation. I am piqued at having lost what I was made to depend upon against my will. Will you believe that in spite of all the fine reflections and philosophy, that retirement and solitude have produced, I have been so excessively hurt at the forgetfulness and indolence of M. de Chaulnes, at the disagreeable effect it will have in the province, and at the pleasure it will give his enemies and those persons who are become mine on his account, that I have actually all the trouble in the world to recover from this stroke. I have therefore avoided with care every thing that could remind me of it, and as your letters

* The Chevalier de Grignan had distinguished himself very much at the battle of Altenheim in 1675.

are always filled with affectionate wishes for me, and the interest you took in that little distinction, I rather would have died than cast my eyes upon them—they would have acted as a poison. Can I, my dear sister, give you a greater mark of confidence than telling you so mean a part of my character, after six years of sound reasoning and rational actions? but tell me, I pray you, if there is the least resemblance between the warmth and friendship M. de Chaulnes has professed for us these two years past, his apparent desire of doing us this favour, and the wonderful lethargy and dreams—into which he fell, after so many solemn promises, repeating that he only rejoiced at leaving Brittany because he would have a better opportunity of concluding the affair. How, after all that, could he meet you? How write to my mother? How justify himself from a charge of having been wanting in all the common duties of friendship? Could any body have believed that the Duke and Duchess of Chaulnes would have been useless to us in respect to the deputation of Brittany, and that Madame de La Fayette, and the Marshal d'Estrees, were the persons who would have procured it for me, had we applied to them in time? I now however begin to think less of this business, and being deprived of all hope, I am like the man at Dijon, who when he was fastened to the rack, said to his Confessor, ‘ Sir, it is a long time since I have felt my mind so much at ease ;’

I really am more tranquil than for this month past, during which I have been expecting letters from the Governor every post. My mother will tell you my idea on the subject. I am certain that love has had a great share in playing me this trick—nothing else can excuse such conduct. What is there strong enough to resist the power of that passion? It is only a pity that we must give the credit of the business to that nasty little simpering BDLR. I have already discovered consolation greater than the Rocks can afford for a future day, and that is in paying a visit to you and M. de Grignan in your noble Castle. I shall take the pretence of drinking the waters, but in fact I shall avoid the Arriere Ban, which otherwise I could not refuse, M. de Chaulnes having desired me to accept it. Next spring then, my dear sister, I may hope to see you. I am happy to hear that Paulina begins to make conquests. Little Coulanges speaks highly in her praise. Your son informs me, in a very pretty letter, that after having been at the taking of three or four towns, he has now a great desire to expose himself to the air of the Rocks. Adieu, I embrace all the illustrious Grignans, without forgetting to include M. de La Garde.

Madame de Sévigné to her daughter.

HIS vexation, my dear child, must have vent; it gives him ease. You may believe that if I see your brother setting out for Bourbon and Grignan, that I shall ask for a place in his carriage. It will appear after all, that I, who do not pretend to philosophy, am the greatest philosopher of the party. My darling Providence is of great use to me upon these occasions. It is only submission to its decrees that sustains Mademoiselle Le Camus, and makes her bear with so much heroism the breaking off of her marriage. I shall be very angry if the Cardinal's being a little out of favour at Court is the cause of it. I fancy his Eminence will content himself with going to Paradise, and will not quit his *Christian rabble*. * I never can believe that people of good sense can act a farce for any length of time—it is too great a restraint. I feel for the disappointment of the family. It is believed that removing the Parliament to Rennes is quite fixed upon.

* Alluding to a prelate very proud of his high birth, who preaching one day, called his parishioners *Christian rabble*.

LETTER CCCLI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 25, 1689.

I MUST talk to you, my dear child, of the Chevalier's blindness concerning the affair of Coet-lagon. Can friendship thus warp our reason? I thought I knew its power, but I always found that although I still loved those that acted wrong, I could see their failings. The Duke de Chaulnes has proved in the clearest manner that he is not to blame. No, I persist in saying that upon that occasion, he performed a master-piece of friendship. It is with us alone that he has failed, and has acted in a manner which is perfectly incomprehensible; but such is the weakness of mortals—we have all two sides. The good Duke has written to me again from Toulon—he thinks of me now continually—but forgot me entirely, during the week he spent at Paris, not a word did he say to the King of the long promised deputation, promised too with so much warmth—the success of which he seemed to have so much at heart. Not a word did he say to M. de Croissi, whose son he took with him, and who would most willingly have named your brother. To tell you how I can reconcile these lethargic

proceedings with the friendship the Chaulnes feel for us (of which I have not the least doubt) is really impossible. Neither your brother or I comprehend it; but we have resolved not to complain. Our pride is concerned in not giving the Duke's enemies such cause to triumph. We remain in our woods and are silent; many changes may happen before another year is elapsed, therefore we are glad that you gave the Duke such a magnificent reception. We shall continue our correspondence with him—but I will only ask his Excellency how he, who thought of us so often, could forget us and himself upon such an occasion—so much for this subject at present.—Adieu my dear child, I embrace you most tenderly.

LETTER CCCLII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, September 28, 1689.

YOU astonish me by the account you give of Monsieur de La Trousse's complaint. I had heard that a sort of palsy had seized him from his hips to his feet—but the circumstance you mention is dreadful and deprives him of all the comforts of society. It is an infirmity which I cannot believe

the waters of Bourbon can cure. Who can suppose that waters which are only to open the body can give a tone to a machine greatly relaxed and without feeling. Indeed, my dear child, it is a dreadful and terrible complaint, and I pity him more than he would pity me in a similar situation. I sincerely hope that the Chevalier will receive the benefit from the waters of Balaruc which he is made to expect. I enclose a letter from Coulanges—you will see that he is still full of your reception and of Paulina's charms. Madame de Chaulnes writes to me that she has spoken to M. de Croissi who will do his best, and that she will write to her husband and M. de Pommerieul—but all this is so ill put together that we have given up all thoughts of the affair. I have an idea that they would not act against M. de Coetlogon. I shall however dismiss it from my thoughts without however being able to imagine that they have ceased to love us—there is more of timidity than indifference in their behaviour. and I already see the good Duchess full of remorse. I will not complain of them, that would have a bad effect. The journey to Rome has made such a confusion of events that the affair of the deputation has been lost in it, and we have suffered no humiliation in the eyes of the public. My heart still excuses M. de Chaulnes, as it is impossible to doubt his loving us better than M. de Coetlogon.

We have here an Abbé de Francheville, who has

a great deal of wit and is extremely agreeable—his genius pleases me amazingly—it is long since I have met with so pleasant a companion. He calls my son *nate dea*, and finds something of a divinity in me—but I only look upon myself to be a country goddess. However to make Monsieur de Grignan easy, who perhaps will fancy I shall marry this clever man, I give him notice that another widow, young, rich, and of a great family, took him to herself two years ago, so charmed was she with his merit and his wit. She had refused some Presidents before, which is saying every thing; and the Abbé after having been courted by the widow as she ought to have been courted by him, gave way to her inclination, and at the age of sixty resigned his living that he might have no other employment than that of a Christian and Cartesian philosopher. He resides entirely at his country seat, and his young and pretty wife knows no pleasure but in being there with him. He came forty miles to visit us, and if we are charmed with his conversation he does not seem to take less delight in ours. You would like him much—he is now called Guèbriac. The remembrance which he retains of you gives me pleasure. Indeed I should not think highly of an understanding that had not discernment enough to see the excellence of yours.

My dear Paulina, I was delighted to see your hand-writing again, fearing that you had forgotten

me in your prosperity. Such a little head as yours might almost be turned by being so high in your Mamma's favour, and having deserved such a happiness. I advise you, my dear, to continue the exercise of those little perfections which will preserve to you your dear mother's love, and the esteem of all the world. Indeed, my dear daughter, I am extremely glad for the sake of your comfort and the honour of my prophecy, that Paulina is become so amiable and gentle and so much what you wished her to be.

I cannot conceive that Mademoiselle Le Camus is become a less desirable match because her uncle does not go to Rome. What nonsense—was she ever looked upon as the neice of a Secretary of State? He is only a Cardinal of great merit and a saint—and in that there is no alteration.

LETTER CCCLIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Sunday, October 2, 1689.

TO-MORROW, twelve months will have elapsed since I embraced you and heard the sound of your voice, and since our painful separation at Charonton took place. Good God how present is that day to my mind, and how ardently do I wish for another which may mark our meeting, that I may embrace and cling to you for ever. Why may I not hope to end my life with her who has been its whole occupation. This is what I feel and what I cannot help writing to you, my dear child, a sort of commemoration of the anniversary of our separation. After this I must tell you that your last letter was written with so much cheerfulness and vivacity, that it quite delighted me—being convinced that it is impossible to write thus, without being in good health and spirits. I shall first answer what you say of the Chevalier—his situation must be very different from that in which I have seen him. What, can he really strike his right foot on the ground? We have sometimes seen him give himself airs with the left, although humbled by the poor figure the other made, which gave us as much concern as it

did him. Truly the recovery of the right foot is a miracle. It began to have as melancholy an appearance as M. de Le R. F. D's. This great change to be effected by bathing only three quarters of an hour in three days is perfectly wonderful. The Mont d'Or and Barége cannot boast of such powers. Pray tell the Chevalier how sincerely I rejoice at this amendment, and hope soon to congratulate him on a complete cure performed by those salutary baths. You praise very highly indeed M. de Carcassonne's care and attentions when you compare them to those you would have for me. I can judge from that how soothing and comforting they are.—The Chevalier you say found Madame de Ganges * very much altered. What a foolish woman not to resemble the portrait his imagination had furnished. I once saw her promising to be like the beauty he admires †—but far, far inferior. A graceful and elegant air and all that makes beauty perfect were wanting—therefore the resemblance dwindled to nothing. If I had known that she was the wife of the M. Ganges I have seen so often, I should have looked at her with more interest, but now it is too

* Sister-in-law to the unfortunate lady of that name, whose history may be seen in 'Les Causes Celebres,' or in an elegant translation of them in the 'Romance of Real Life,' by Mrs. Charlotte Smith.

† Probably this alludes to Madame de Grignan.

late. I must thank you for your animated picture of Madame Montbrun—never was there a more excellent description—your brother is enchanted with it, but cannot tell you so at present, as he is engaged with his worthy friend. How much I am obliged to you for having quitted every thing to amuse me with the picture of this truly original woman. What a singular character, full of her ancestors, which she can trace as far back as the deluge ; all her relations, Guelfs, and Gibbelines, friends, and enemies, with whom you fill an inimitable page. Her absurdity in calling the Marquis d'Huxelles the enemy, meaning to speak of the Germans, and all the crowned heads in whose greatness she envelopes herself. All this is excellent. I am entertained with her surprise at your natural complexion—she thinks you very careless to let the small veins and real colour of your skin be seen—she thinks it more decent to dress her face, and she wonders at your shewing that which God has given you. To her you appear negligent of your appearance and quite in undress. I admire Messieurs de Grignans' skill in having thought her complexion a natural one. This shews mens' discernment—they neither know what they see, or what they say. I have known some who have admired beauties far less admirable than her.

You made a pleasant excursion to St. Esprit ; you

saw M. de Basville, the terror of Languedoc, and also M. de Broglio.* I think our Revel is the Cæsar, and Broglio the *Laridon Negligé*.† They have not always been good friends—Did not the Chevalier once see them both in Mademoiselle du Bouchet's chains? Broglio was so violent a lover, that to avoid him was one of the causes which threw her into the Convent of the Carmelites.

By the by, my dearest, we are no longer angry with our good Governors, which makes me very happy. I was in despair while I thought them in the wrong. It is certain, (and all our friends are of that opinion) that the Duke could not say a word to the King either of Brittany, or of the deputation, with propriety—Rome occupied all the conversations. He spoke to M. de Lavardin, he wrote to Marshal d'Estrees. The Duchess said every thing in her power to M. de Croissi, and nothing is more easy than to conceive that both the Duke and Duchess wished to succeed in that business. In short, we think no more about it, and if the deputation was to fall to us, we should think it a miracle. But this is not the greatest evil the death of the Pope has occasioned, and I am

* Victor Maurice, Count de Broglio, who commanded in Languedoc. He was brother to M. de Revel.

† See La Fontaine's fable called 'L'Education.'

really afflicted when I think of the loss you will make in Avignon. I thank you my daughter for making me a member of your society by telling me every thing that passes in it. Nothing is so dear and interesting to me as what belongs to you and your family. I recommend to your care your health and the preservation of your youth, and for a very good reason. I laugh with you at M. de Grignan's gout—a strange way of comforting a poor man who is screaming with pain ; but any thing is better than bad bowels. God preserve you all. Distribute my love, compliments, and caresses, where they are due. As for yourself, my dearest, take a large share, for all I can give is yours.

LETTER CCCLIV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Wednesday, October 5, 1689.

IT had never entered my head that the long black pins which confine the curls round the forehead were the cause of the long faces we see. This hint would be very useful to certain persons of our acquaintance. I had heard they were friendly pins, but you say that they fix themselves in the temples,

prevent circulation, make abcesses, which occasion the death of some young people, while those who are most fortunate, have only their faces lengthened half a yard, and grow as pale as death. Happily youth, which is not easily destroyed, recovers after a time. I think this story quite worthy of those which the Princess of Tarente used to tell me formerly. However it is very well to know a little of every thing. I have no doubt but M. de La Garde who has never refused trying any remedy, will adopt that which the lady you mention recommends. You will see him with his head where his heels should be *turning an affair* * of that sort. I am quite convinced that after trying such a remedy there would be no more sore eyes. I have nothing to tell you to cope with your account of that visit. We have had, as I mentioned, a most agreeable visitor with us—a man of the easiest temper and most enlightened understanding, and willing to join in any conversations—he was here a week. One of his brothers-in-law joined us, and the Abbè Marbœuf who is always an addition to a party. We had another brother-in-law of the Count de Lys, who would spoil every thing if he spoke—but he is a silent misanthropist, and keeps his ill humour to himself. He is a handsome figure, sings as well as

* A favourite expression of M. de La Garde's.

Beaumaviel. I could have fancied I heard him. When our agreeable friend was gone, we felt quite flat, and remembered our old remark which we made when with you in this part of the world, that tiresome visitors are much more desirable than agreeable ones—when we get rid of the former we feel happy and relieved, but when the latter leave us, we are quite lost and dejected, and know not how to get into our old track again. In short, it is a misfortune to have the company of rational people, but it is one that does not happen often.

You ask me news of the deputation—we chuse to banish it from our minds. Madame de Chaulnes has spoken twice to M. de Croissi. In a word, all our friends are doing wonders. We are sure that the Duke wished to oblige us, and there the matter rests. As for me I believe that M. de Coetlogan will carry the day for the reasons I told you in my last letter, but we wait the event with great tranquillity. I thank you for having prevented the Chevalier's writing to M. de Cavoie—this time it would have been wrong.

Your brother laughed most heartily at your fine lady. He remembers a story of a long visage when at Rennes, and wants to know how and where he first heard of it—he is gone to visit Marshal d'Estrees. You ask what we have done with our twenty ships—alas, what we always do with them. At Brest they were received with transport—it was the

finest thing in the world. They all sailed together and went to cruize as far as Ushant. After that they returned to Belle Isle and to Brest, and then all was over. You see that the man who said there had been no decisive victory at sea since the battle of Actium was perfectly right.

Madame de Lamoignon had brought forth a son at Baille: in carrying him to Paris, the coachman overturned the carriage on the road and killed the poor child. What think you of the difference between having a good or a bad coachman? You are right in rejoicing that the gout has seized M. de Grignan in preference to his complaint in the bowels. God preserve the inside of the place and save the outworks from being hurt, for every thing that is called pain is terrible to bear. The Chevalier will agree with me in that. Continue to tell me what advantage he has reaped from the waters of Balaruc, and when your States of Languedoc are to meet. Ours commence at Rennes on the 20th of this month. Adieu my dearest child, ah with what delight would I walk with you on your beautiful terrace.

LETTER CCCLV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Sunday, October 9, 1689.

NO letters from you, my dear child ; I am always out of spirits when that comfort fails me. I shall have two to-morrow, and must use myself to this disappointment, since complaints are useless. I am here quite alone at present—your brother is at Rennes, and his wife gone to see her mother. To-morrow I shall have an agreeable woman from Vitre whom you have seen at Paris—she is a pleasant companion, and will prevent my feeling solitary. M. de Pommerieuil gave Marshal d'Estrees the Duke de Chaulne's letter. The Duchess spoke twice with great zeal to M. de Croissi. The Abbè Tétu told the Minister how much she had it at heart. If after all that, we do not obtain the deputation, I shall say that the Duke *is at Rome*. M. de Lavardin does not preside at the States, and Chateurenaud and Coetlogon being in the service, are preferred to us—in short, that God did not chuse it should be otherwise. We have done every thing to the best of our abilities, and I am' resolved not to hate friends who are quite as much vexed at the affair as ourselves—not a word more will I write on.

the subject. What say you to M. de Seignelais, who is made a Minister at thirty six? Madame de Lavardin writes me wonders of Madame de Monci, and of her brother* who has forbid his Secretary in the strongest terms to receive a present directly, or indirectly, from any body, and to engage him to obey, has given him at first setting out two thousand crowns, has raised his salary which was eight hundred francs, to double that sum. He has given his servants in proportion, to preserve them from similar temptations. You will allow that this is a noble plan and worthy of gratifying so great a soul as M. de Harlai's. Madame de Monci equals him in liberality, seeing that his expences and his table are so much increased, gives him the value of twelve thousand francs in silver plate, perfectly new and fashionable, and will not suffer her brother to return her thanks, saying that it is not worth mentioning. I confess it is the power of doing such deeds that I envy, and I feel a heart-felt pleasure when I meet with souls capable of generous actions. It is making the best use of riches, and placing virtue above every thing. I thought you would be glad to learn these particulars of a family you love so well. I wrote to Madame de Monci and told her one should congratulate the King and

* Achilles de Harlai had just been named First President of the Parliament of Paris.

all France, that such a man as her brother was placed at the head of the Magistracy. I am sure she will have been pleased with my letter, but it is plain she will not answer it, being unwilling to allow herself the most trifling dissipation; and having devoted all her thoughts to devotion, may Heaven conduct her in the path she has chosen—she is lost to us, but happy is her lot.

I hear that the Marquis d'Huxelles has been very well received at Court, which is now at Fontainebleau—that the Duke of Burgundy * and his Governors are ill with an intermittent fever, but you know all this, my dear Countess. If I had received your letter I would answer it and not *beat the bushes* thus for subjects. If a ridiculous Madame de Montbrun had visited me, I could write you a volume; but here we have no variety and matter fails me. Let me talk to you of Grignan—how does the dear Count? Where is his enemy? Is it within the walls or without? He must allow us now to wish him pains in his arms, to save his bowels—but we pray that the whole citadel may be in good order. Will the Chevalier return to Balaruc, and take a provision of health for the winter. Where is M. de La Garde? Is his head or his heels uppermost? Is Paulina always the most fortunate of girls, or is it only some-

* Grandson to Louis XIV. and father of Louis XV.

times? And you, my daughter, are you handsome? That is to say, well. I think continually of Grignan, of you all, of your terraces, of your beautiful and commanding prospect. I leave my woods to walk with you in idea—but in the number of thoughts that crowd upon me, I meet with some that make me exclaim with sadness—for how can I bear to reflect on the loss you are now making at Avignon. Adieu, embrace me, love me, and believe that I am wholly yours. Reflect that there is a year, a whole year elapsed, since I have either seen or met with you.

LETTER CCCLVI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Wednesday, October 12, 1689.

AT length your two letters are arrived, but good God, how miserable the first would have made me if I had received it without the second, in which it appears that the poor Chevalier's fever had began to intermit, and had given him a day's rest. This relieves me from the fear of a continued fever, with all the horrors of delirium, lethargy, &c. How inflammatory is his blood—what acrimony in

that gouty humour—what a pity *that* blood which boils in its country's cause should also produce such bad effects. In a word, this is a heavy affliction for you all—and for you in particular, whose affectionate heart leads you to nurse those you love—now I am more at Grignan than even yourself, although I was already constantly there in idea; but I take a double interest since the illness of the Chevalier. Great distances make us write many absurdities—at least they become so by arriving at an improper time. You are melancholy, occupied, uneasy, and a letter from Brittany arrives, lively, gay, and full of trifles. I really am quite ashamed of sending you such—but I have often told you these are the disadvantages and effects of great distances.

I mentioned in my last that we are no longer angry with the Duke and Duchess of Chaulnes. He was certainly (as all our friends from Paris tell me) not to blame. Your brother is at Rennes—a visit agreeable to the Marshal, with whom he plays every night at *tric trac*. He is waiting for M. de La Trimouille, to whom he wishes to pay his respects. He then returns here with his wife, which is the wisest plan he can adopt. I am still alone and perfectly satisfied. I shall to-morrow have the lady from Vitre—she had business which detained her there. I must tell you that I have had a letter from Madame de La Fayette written in the style of au

order from above, telling me first from herself, and then in the name of my other female friends, that they will all cease to love me if I refuse returning immediately to Paris. They say I shall fall sick here, that I shall die, that my mind will lose all its energy, that I shall grow childish—that in short, they will hear no reasoning on the subject, that I *must* come, and that they will not even read my bad excuses. I assure you, my dear daughter, the letter is written with a warmth of friendship and a vivacity which would please you—this is the plan she proposes. I am to go to Malicorne in my son's carriage. Madame de Chaulnes is to meet me there. I am to live with her at Paris, and not purchase horses till next spring—but the best part of the plan is, that I am to find a thousand crowns on my toilet, lent me by some friend who wants them not, and offers them without interest. I am to take my own time to repay the money, and above all must set out immediately. The letter is long, considering the writer was but just recovered from a fever. I have answered with the gratitude it deserved, but taking the offer as a jest, I assure her that I shall not mope myself very much with my son and his wife, with books, and the hope of settling my affairs in a manner which will ensure my return to Paris next summer without being obliged to live any where but at my own house, without wanting a carriage because I shall be able to keep one, and

without owing a thousand crowns to that generous friend whose noble proceeding would hurry me in my payment more than a hundred bailiffs—that I give her and my other friends my word, that I will not be sick, will not grow old, nor doating, and that I know they will continue to love me in spite of their threats. Thus have I answered those three kind women.* I will shew you some day Madame de La Fayette's letter—but good God what a proposal—I to have no home, to be a dependant, to have no equipage, and to owe a thousand crowns. In truth, my dear child, I had much rather without any comparison be here. The horrors of a winter in the country are only formidable at a distance—near, it is nothing. Let me know if you approve of my resolution. Were you at Paris, then I should be cruelly divided; but you are not there. I took my time and settled my plan accordingly, and if by a miracle you should fly to Paris like a bird, I know not if my reason would not appeal to yours for permission to spend this winter in finishing some little payments which will make my future life comfortable. I could not resist telling you this little story, hoping that it will not arrive at an unlucky moment, but that the Chevalier will be as well as I wish him

* The ladies de Chaulnes, de La Fayette, and de Lavar-
din.

to be. You astonish me by your description of the Duke de Chaulnes. I assure you that during our journey together, he was quite a different man, and very good company. I know not if it was your genii that animated him, but you would have found him such as I represented him. I see no resemblance of my old friend in the picture you have drawn. Your brother imagined that a certain foolish woman had desired the Duke not to name him for the deputation—but now he sees he was mistaken.

Your dream surprised me extremely; you think it a delusion because you did not see one tree before the door, but you will laugh when you hear that there really is not one remaining. Your brother had them all cut down, yes, every one two years ago—he piques himself upon having a fine prospect from his house. Your dream is so completely verified, that he is making a low wall round his parterre, and making a bowling green. If he is able to execute these things the place will be beautiful and quite in the style of Le Notre*—the spot which we call Coulanges Square will be full of orange trees. You ought to have seen in your dream all these intended improvements—since you saw what is already done, I shall keep your letter as a treat for my son and his wife—they will be delighted to see your kind remembrance.

* The Capability Brown of that time.

There is not the least coldness between me and the Pontchartrains—I visited them at Paris after your departure. I have written to them both. The father has answered me as well as my son, and both most agreeably. I have nothing against them, since it is no crime to be the friends of our good Governors. I return a double portion of compliments to my dear Count. I pay my respects to the sage La Garde. I send a kiss to Paulina, and my heart to you, my dear child. May the Almighty restore the Chevalier's health, and may this letter find you all in spirits. Tell me which is the Chevalier's apartment, that my imagination may know where to find you all. The Abbé Bigorre informs me that M. de Niel fell down in the King's chamber, and received a violent contusion. Felix bled him and cut the artery—the great operation was obliged to be performed immediately. What say you to such an accident my dear Count? I really know not which I pity most, he who suffered the operation, or a King's *first surgeon*, who cuts an artery.

LETTER CCCLVII.

Madame de La Fayette to Madame de Sévigné.

[This is the letter mentioned by Madame de Sevigne in the preceding letter.]

Paris, October 8, 1689.

MY style must be laconic to-day, my head is confused. I have had a paroxism of fever—I desired M. du Bois to inform you of it.

Your affair of the deputation has failed completely. Your friends did wonders from every side. I doubt whether the Duke de Chaulnes himself could have succeeded in it had he been here. The King did not shew the least repugnance towards Monsieur de Sèvigné—but he had long been engaged, and he mentioned it to all those who wished for the deputation. We must lay aside our hopes till the next Assembly of States—but that is not the question at present—the business is, my dear friend, that you must not by any means pass the winter in Brittany. You are growing old, the Rocks are surrounded with woods—colds and coughs will seize upon you, you will grow dull, your energies of mind will decrease—depend upon it this will happen, and what are worldly affairs in comparison with those calamities. Dont say a word to me about debts and money.

I shall stop your mouth immediately. Your son will convey you in his equipage as far as Malicorne. There you will find M. de Chaulne's horses and calèche—and in a trice you will be at Paris. You will alight at the Hotel de Chaulnes, where you will reside, as your own house is not ready for you, and you have no horses, therefore you will be able at your leisure to make your preparations for returning home. The next thing is to consider that you pay a pension to M. de Sèvigné. You have servants at Paris, put all that together and you will find you spend money (for your house rent always continues) you will tell me you have debts which, by remaining in Brittany you will in time be able to pay—but be assured you will find here a thousand crowns quite at your disposal, with which you may relieve yourself from any embarrassment. They will be lent to you without interest, and you may repay them little by little at your own time. Do not ask me whence they come, for you are not to know it—but be assured those who make the loan are not afraid of losing their money. Do not attempt to argue on this subject—you would only lose your words and your letters—you *must* come write what you will—we will even not read what you say—in a word, my dear friend, once more I repeat you *must* come or give up my friendship, Madame de Chaulnes, and Madame de Lavardin. We do not chuse to have a friend who insists upon growing

old and killing herself by her own fault. There is folly and weakness in your conduct—remember you *must* come as soon as the weather is a little better.

LETTER CCCLVIII.

To Madame de Grignan.

At the Rocks, October 16, 1689.

I AM informed that M. de Coetlogon is to have the deputation—I never doubted it, nor (I am convinced) did M. de Chaulnes. He has much discernment, he saw the return of the Parliament to Rennes, and the active part which Monsieur de Coetlogon took in the affair as Governor of the city. Every thing was in his favour, and I do not believe that if the Duke had remained, his whole interest would have accomplished the business for your brother, therefore every thing is for the best—but although I accused M. de Chaulnes of negligence, I was soon convinced of my mistake by what appeared in his justification. Is it possible that you, my daughter, a complete Cartesian, whose judgement is so strong, whose reasoning is so just, that you should be capable of thinking the Duke wrong, when he was certainly right, because he wanted activity and zeal upon another occasion—could such

an event prevent your seeing things afterwards in a proper light? This is a strange sort of justice, and you would have been much displeased had the Court of Requests judged your law suit upon that principle. I, who am no philosopher, can with truth declare that I felt the same in this respect as if we had obtained the deputation. You know that ingratitude is my aversion, most truly may I say so. I detest it wherever I meet with it, but you must have forgotten all this since you imagined that there was something *forced* in what I wrote upon the subject. I had an idea that you *would* think so—but spare me, I entreat you, the mortification of being supposed insincere even for a moment. It would grieve me if you believed me so changed; no, the sentiment flowed naturally from my pen which makes me repeat it here.

I cannot recover my surprise at the alteration you found in M. de Chaulnes; how different he appeared during the little journey I performed with him. Your genii then animated him I suppose, but your presence afterwards, joined to the business he had at Rome, was too much for him. There is a Cardinal Barbareni (a Venetian) and Bishop of Padua, who had more votes than were necessary to ensure his election, but the Accessit spoilt every thing. I cannot tell you what *that* is, except that it is something that prevents a man from being made a Pope—still however there will be one and but

too soon. That thought accompanies me in my solitary walks. I am once more alone—my son and his wife are gone to Rennes—my friend from Vitre is returned home, yet I am extremely comfortable, therefore do not pity me. My daughier-in-law will very soon return. I take great care of my health, for I would not be sick here on any account.

It is reported here that the King of England* has beat Marshal Schomberg. I shall not believe it till I hear it from St. Germain.

LETTER CCCLIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Wednesday, October 26, 1689:

I IMAGINE, my dear child, that by this time you have lost your little treasure at Avignon. The first compliment the King paid the new Pope (who is exactly the man he wished for, and in merit even beyond his hopes) was to return to the holy see what he possessed at Avignon, and which was so very desirable to you—this thought gives me great pain. I enclose some particulars which we have received from the Abbè Bigorre. They

*. Meaning James II.

will amuse you. The Duke de Chaulnes is too fortunate—nobody can deny that—he has the talent of chusing the best Pope. This one is better than we expected; he is a Venetian, and the same man who on the fourth of October made the complimentary speech to M. de Chaulnes, who in return made him a Pope two days after, for this exaltation took place with all the precipitancy of French manners, and against the opinion of either the Spaniards or the Germans—the sacred college could not produce a man of a better understanding—his only fault is being eighty years of age. Madame de Chaulnes is delighted with her husband's choice. The new Pope enquired tenderly after her and Madame de Carman, declaring that he should die satisfied if he could see them once again. All France has complimented the Duchess. I trust you have written her a line on the subject, and to the Duke also, although he robs you of Avignon. This is the most agreable event in the world to him. You know all this, but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of talking it over.

You have now M. d'Ailes with you—he wrote to me from Paris, and I shall direct my answer to Grignan, and as he talks to me of his abdication, I shall not hesitate in telling him what I think upon the subject, although the thing is done, and he says with the approbation of M. de Pomponne and Madame de Vins; but it is so easy to extort appro-

bation sometimes, that one must not call it an authority. He tells me that his place was of no use but to M. de Grignan. What can prove more that he is wrong in giving it up? Is it *nothing* to be useful to one's elder brother? He need but remark how much pleasure his abdication will give M. d'Aix, to judge how much mischief it will do M. de Grignan—since when, has any one of that name given up the interests of his family. They, who you have often said, love their blood to the last drop, have they not proved on every public occasion that they are strongly united? How happens it that the Archbishop is the first to renounce so honourable a reputation? I think as you do, that one must be very easily hurt if the difference of sitting a little higher upon a bench at the Assembly of the States (and that only for a few days) can make a man take the resolution of speaking to the King, and representing himself as a person who had long made great sacrifices, and borne a heavy burthen at length grown insupportable. Is it possible that the King really entered into the merits of his complaint and was not surprised that the honour of serving him (so much valued when the Archbishop wanted the place) could not support him under a mortification which existed only in his imagination. In short, my dear child, I am wounded at this abdication, and wish he may repent of it (as he has done of other things) to avenge us. But having said so much to

you, I believe I must refer the Archbishop to your letter, and only touch lightly on the subject in my answer to him.

The day after I sent off my last letter to you your sister-in-law returned; she quitted Rennes in spite of all the entreaties of her friends, and of all the pleasures she might have enjoyed there, this surprised and would have made me uneasy, if I had not seen by her manner that she was really sincere and came to me with pleasure.

The young Marchioness de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan.

I HAVE read, my dear sister, all the kind things you have written concerning your brother and me. He is still at Rennes—but I have sense enough not to hesitate a moment in returning to Madame de Sévigné. I am sure you will approve of my taste, and that the choice I made will not diminish your love for me. I will not talk to you of the deputation, the subject is exhausted. We bear our mortification so well, that nothing can prove more clearly how worthy we were of succeeding in what we wished to obtain. I am delighted to hear that our apartment at Grignan is already fixed upon. I embrace you most affectionately—you will surely permit me to do so—if I dared I would also embrace

Monsieur de Grignan, but my attachment to him is of so tender a nature that I make a scruple of every thing.

LETTER CCCLX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, November 2, 1689.

I ALWAYS receive your letters more regularly when the weather is fine; but the heavens in your Provence seem in an alarming state—you are not accustomed to such a deluge—your Castle must be in great confusion, and if you have not saved your beautiful furniture and that of your closet worthy of Versailles, I shall be quite afflicted. We begin to have too much rain here, but as there are still moments of sun-shine, I take advantage of them with pleasure, because the soil is dry and as agreeable to walk upon as our dear Livry.

The first part of your letter says a great deal in few words. Ottoboni is Pope—Avignon given up—the King and M. de Chaulnes triumphant—and Madame de Grignan ruined—that is the part which wounds me to the heart. We must however try to

substitute a hope in lieu of the solid good his Majesty had given you.

You found then the proposals of my friends very kind—nothing indeed could be more so—but it was sufficient to have this proof of their affection and goodness of heart. As for the rest, indeed my dear child, it was impossible to act otherwise than I have done. Our little Marquis will soon, I trust, be in winter quarters like his neighbours, and will be able to visit you. I rejoice that the Count is grown fat—I always found him lean which made me uneasy. The manner in which you paint your storms and tempests is so poetic that it has quite amused my imagination.

Your brother is returned to Rennes; his wife devotes herself to amusing me, and paying me every kind of attention. Monsieur de Lauzun is going to Ireland upon a romantic expedition at the head of six thousand men.

November 9.

I AM very well pleased with the letter M. de Chaulnes has written to you; he gives you very good reasons—you see he did what he could. Madame de Chaulnes tells me in her letter that she hopes you will forgive her husband the mischief he has been forced to do to you, and mentions that

the armies will take the road which will restore your son to your sight.

I dare not talk to you of the magnificent dinners at Rennes, lest I should give you an indigestion—it is one continual feast—dinner and supper in succession at all the great houses. Your brother writes to his wife that all her friends regret her absence, and that he is sorry her delicate lungs prevent her taking a share of the pleasures of Rennes. This he probably says that I may not believe she remains here on my account—but she disclaims any such insinuation, and declares that it is not her health, but her desire to enjoy my company that makes her stay at the Rocks. This declaration is made with such an air of sincerity that I cannot doubt its truth. We read a great deal, and time passes away so quickly that it is needless to wish it more rapidity, at least till the day approaches that will give me the happiness of embracing you—that day I own I ardently wish for. Adieu we have the finest weather in the world—I imagine yours still more beautiful.

LETTER CCCLXI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, November 16, 1689.

BOTH your letters are at length arrived—I shall take for my first subject the hopes and fears that agitate you at present. I am like you anxious to know if there is any foundation for Madame de Maison's congratulations—sometimes she has given us good news, and sometimes bad, and now she gives us reason to believe that the Chevalier's regiment will fall to his nephew. The thing is so natural that it would be doing violence to oneself to doubt it—and even you who are so clever in finding out subjects of affliction will have some difficulty to succeed here. You cannot doubt my being as much interested in the affair as yourself.

I shall say nothing concerning Paulina's taste for romances. I, as well as many wiser persons, read them with pleasure, therefore I must be silent—there are examples of both the good and the mischief they have done. You do not like them and have succeeded very well in the world. I have not acted my part amiss, yet liked them much; every thing agrees with the healthy as you say. I, in support of my taste, have thought that a young man

became generous and brave in reading the histories of my heroes, and that a young girl became polished and chaste in reading Cleopatra. There may be some heads that see things improperly, but probably those would not make a proper use of other kind of reading—or might as well not read at all. The most essential thing is to have a mind well directed—with that one is not easily spoiled. Madame de La Fayette is another example in my favour—yet it is true, very true, that Nicole's Moral Essays are better—you are charmed with them. You will be fortunate and an object of envy if God has made choice of that book to inspire you with true devotion. I at least draw one advantage from it, which is the conviction that religion is the only real good in this world—that once granted, let me entreat my dear Paulina not to acquire a taste for light and frivolous reading, at least not in such a degree as to prevent her liking more solid ones. We are now reading the History of the Church, by Monsieur Godeau—with that and the Abbadie, one is ready for martyrdom. Love me always, my dearest child, but never compare your affection to that of others; your heart must be ranked amongst the most perfect, and rarely will be equalled.

LETTER CCCLXII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, November 20, 1689.

YOU have relieved me from much anxiety by telling me that our Marquis is made Colonel of his uncle's fine regiment—at eighteen it would be difficult to be much higher. Here then is an end of your uneasiness upon that subject, and the dialogue of hopes and fears is thus happily concluded. All that remains now is to support this situation which will occasion a greater expence. You must pay the Chevalier—how much is the sum? We may hope that you will be allowed to sell the company, complete as it is, and the work of your own hands. In short, good and evil are always mixed; honours increase expence. We should be sorry if these events did not take place, and we are embarrassed when they do—such is the world.

You are now then (in general) a hundred persons at Grignan, and eighty is your least number. Your friends I think live upon you without mercy. I approve of your not having been at Lambesc where your health and Paulina's youth might have been exposed to the fury of the small pox, a dreadful ill which you cannot too carefully avoid.

Madame de Chaulnes tells me she has received a charming letter from you. Madame de Lavardin was in affliction—the Bishop of Chalons dying, and his holy mother overwhelmed with grief at the foot of the crucifix—the Bishop of Senlis and all the Sanguins extremely happy. They have got our little Abbaye of Livry, it suits them very much, and seems still someway connected with me—much more so than if it had fallen to strangers, the Sanguins being our old neighbours.

I shall be glad to have some news from Lambesc, and to know how the Archbishop of Arles bore the humiliation of being in the second rank at the States. I remain in the same opinion concerning that affair. Madame de La Fayette tells me she is making herself very fine in honour of her son's marriage—she sends me a description of her dress, and calls it sending me an idea of her—send me yours my dearest—I should not know Paulina and you were I to meet you.

We are reading the life of Theodosius—your brother adds to its beauty by his manner of reading. It is an inimitable work, the style quite perfect—but such a book lasts me but two days. I shall be sorry if Paulina has no taste for so well written a life. Romances ought not to make her dislike history, if they do I shall think it a bad sign. Madame de Marbœuf accommodates herself to our readings, and we accommodate ourselves to her card party,

when we can muster people enough to make one. She is an excellent and noble minded woman—she knows how to love, and adores you.

Adieu my dearest child, send me a gazette of your health—your constitution has suffered violences formerly which I cannot think of without emotion.

LETTER CCCLXIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, November 30, 1689.

HOW much I am obliged to you for having sent me M. de St. Ponange's letter. It is a pleasure to have seen with one's own eyes such an attestation of the wisdom and merit of our Marquis—a merit so suited to his age.

You were then struck with the *word** used by Madame de La Fayette in the midst of all the kindness her letter contained, although I often say to myself that I must not forget that truth. Yet I own I was surprised, for I feel no symptoms of decay to remind me of it—yet do I not omit making reflec-

* Madame de La Fayette says, 'You are *old*,' &c. &c. See her Letter.

tions and calculations, and find the conditions on which life is given us, rather hard—it appears to me that I have been dragged against my will to this fatal point when I must suffer old age whether I chuse it or not. I see it, I am arrived at it, and I would wish not to go any farther, not to advance in the road of infirmity, of pains, of loss of memory. I could wish to avoid being disfigured by the hand of Time which is uplifted to strike, and I hear a voice that cries you must advance, or if you refuse you must *die*—a state against which Nature recoils—such however is the fate of those who have reached a certain age, but a reflection upon the will of Providence and upon that universal law to which we are all subject, recalls Reason to her seat, and makes us submit with patience. Summons it to your aid, my dearest child, and let not your affectionate heart make you shed tears which your reason must condemn.

How good you are to take so much pains to form Paulina's mind, and even to be her dancing master. You have as much skill as Desairs—she need but look and copy you. Is she tall and graceful? I thank her for not placing me in the list of grandmothers that she hates. I am safe thank Heaven. I admire the regimen her Confessor has prescribed to preserve her against the danger of reading the *Pastor fido*—it is exactly like taking rhubarb and quinces, as I have seen Madame de Pomponne do

before dinner, and afterwards eat mushrooms and sallad, and then adieu to the quinces. I leave the application to dear Paulina. But does she not adore her amiable mother? how happy she is to see you, to hear you speak—these are degrees of felicity.

I know not my dear where you are, or M. de Grignan, or the Chevalier. You talked of a journey to Lambesc—the idea of the small pox always displeases me. Madame de Marbœuf is still here, and the Abbè Charier—they are exactly the company that suit us. We have fine weather, and walk a good deal. I wear the wrapping gown you gave me, which I like—it does me honour and profit, and is admired—in short, it is my daughter's present. Do not fancy me in a dark and solitary wood with an owl over my head. Our situation is not at all what it is represented to be. Nothing passes more insensibly than a winter in the country—it is only tremendous at a distance. My health continues in a state of perfection—tell me every particular of yours.

LETTER CCCLXIV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, December 14, 1689.

IF the Chevalier read your letters he would not, when he wishes to find amusement, seek those that come from a great distance. All you say of Livry is charming—I admire the lively style in which you write—teazed as you are with troublesome and vexatious affairs, it is *you*, my dear child, who deserve praise, and not me. I am like the violet, humble and concealed—I hold no rank, no place upon the earth but in your heart; that indeed I value beyond any in the world (much as I am attached to my other friends). What *I* do in the way of sacrifices is perfectly natural and easy; but you, placed in the most brilliant situation, Governors of the most frequented province in France, have the skill to join economy to magnificence—it is *that* which is surprising, and much I marvel that you have been able to go on so long, particularly now that your son adds so much to your expences. As these thoughts very often disturb my rest, I fear that you, who are much nearer the evil, suffer exceedingly.

Our amiable and accomodating visitors are gone—my son and his wife I have also sent away to

make some necessary visits. We shall meet again in a few days with double pleasure. I never feel alone, having books, and work, and fine weather, at present. If my dear daughter had fewer cares, (living as I do in the hope of being re-united to her) what could be wanting to my comfort ?

I have written to the Marquis, although I had before complimented him upon his promotion. I desire him to read while he is at those dull quarters, and where there is no other amusement, I tell him that since he loves his profession it is shameful not to wish to read the lives of those men who have distinguished themselves as warriors. I scold, I teaze him, and hope we shall work a change in him ; it will be the first time he has refused us any thing. I am less sorry to hear that he likes too much sleep, (knowing that he will never slumber in the paths of glory) than to hear that he has a taste for play—I prove to him that it is an absolute ruin—if he plays little, his losses will certainly not be great, but small rains penetrate in time. If he plays often he will be cheated ; he must pay, and if he has no superfluous money, he must take it from what he really wants, or forfeit his word. He may be unlucky because he plays ill, and often without being cheated, people lose continually. In short, my dear child, it will be a very bad thing both for him and for you, since in the end you must feel the inconveniences of his extravagance. Happy would it be if the Marquis

loved reading like his sister Paulina. What a charming disposition is hers, she seeks to improve her mind by knowledge—with *that* taste one can always conquer *ennui* and idleness, two horrid monsters—novels are soon read. I wish Paulina to read history upon a regular plan, that she may have a slight but general knowledge of every thing. Do you instruct her in geography? My daughter, you are to direct and rectify her taste in every useful science. It is your duty, and who knows it better than you do. As for the rest I guessed that in a short time you would render her very amiable—with natural genius and a great desire to please you there could be no doubt of success.

You tell me you expected M. de Vins to dine with you—seeing M. du Plessis behind him would have surprised you much, had I not apprized you of his visit—he will tell you all his afflictions. He has informed me of half, and promised me the rest. He has been deceived and duped in the article of fortune, and he so ardently wishes to get rid of his wife that one might suspect something worse, if he had not assured me that his honour was safe. God grant it—at all events he has done a very foolish thing—nothing requires to be done with more reflection than taking a wife. Apropos of marriages, young de La Fayette was yesterday to enter the holy state. His little wife and him were to dine at his mother's, and sup and sleep at M. de Martillac's

How singular it will appear to hear your son say, I have been dancing all night with Madame de La Fayette. I have played at battledore and shuttle cock with that wild young creature. The bride is very lively, and your son one of her best friends.

Our Madame de La Fayette approves and wants to imitate the Chevalier de Gignan in every thing. She admires him exceedingly, and is at all the expence of the friendship—his dreadful gout makes him proud, and insensible in a manner to our friend's advances. Adieu my dearest, here is a great deal of chit chat, but you are not sorry when I amuse my leisure in writing to you.

LETTER CCCLXV.

To the same.

At the Rocks, December 13, 1689.

NOBLE lady, did not I do well to send you the Pope's Apostolic note to the Duchess de Chaulnes. You make me perceive that he does not say a word of the Holy Ghost's influencing his election. I only remarked that he frankly avowed owing his exaltation to France and its Ambassador; that, and the praise which he bestows upon the Duchess, were worthy of attention. As for the

Holy Ghost, I am not afraid of its being offended at not having more respect paid to it in the Conclave. We who are disciples of Providence are not deceived; we are convinced that it does every thing for the best, and often by secret springs which are beyond our limited comprehensions. I have a high opinion of the letter you wrote to M. Pelletier, without knowing either the particulars or the subject. I am sure that you will have made a good use of the Holy Ghost's influence in depriving you of your fortune at Avignon.

What do you say to the King's setting the example of sending all his fine plate to the mint? The Duchess de Lude (quite despairing) has sent hers; Madame de Chaulnes, her beautiful tables, and Madame de Lavardin the service of plate which was sent to her for Rome, convinced that her husband will never return there—see if you have any thing to do in that way. The King's apartments alone, have put into circulation six millions of livres.*

Your brother and his wife are returned each from their different visits. They seem so well pleased at meeting me again here, that I almost pity them for having left me. My daughter-in-law has some pain in her head from a blow she received by being overturned in her carriage; two of her handsome mares

* About 240,000*l.*

broke their harnesses and run away—your brother is anxious to get them again—this is a real distress in our little family.

December 21.

I RESUME my pen, my dear Countess, to tell you the rest of our history. The little mares run a great way as young creatures do, when they can escape from their guardians. At length one of them was found at Vitre, and the other at a farm. The people at Vitre were surprised to see that fine animal heated and unharnessed enter the town—they were tempted to ask her what she had done with her master. Do you remember Rinaldo's horse which Rolando met running without his master—what an affliction—he wanted to know news of his friend, and addressing himself to the horse says '*dimnis caval gentel, &c. &c.*' * I know not what Rubicano answered, but I assure you that we felt great pleasure when our two little mares were safely lodged in the stables.

* See Orlando Furioso.

The young Marchioness to Madame de Grignan.

I SWEAR to you, my dear sister, that I will not leave Madame de Sévigné any more. I fall, I bruise myself, I break my head, when I am no longer under her protection—but I feel less sensibly my own misfortunes than my charming nephew's prosperity. I wish Paulina every sort of felicity, and a younger lover than her admirer from Rome.

LETTER CCCLXVI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, December 28, 1689.

WE have had here the finest weather in the world till Christmas eve—I was then strolling to the end of the long walk, when all at once I saw a dreadful black cloud in the South which had a truly poetical appearance; at the same time a fog arose, which made me run into the house as fast as possible. I remained in my chamber, or at the chapel, till to-day, when the dove brought us an olive branch. The earth has resumed its colour, and the sun bursting from its retreat will allow me

soon to resume my walks—for you may depend upon it, my dear child, that when the weather is bad, I will not leave my fire side where I can converse with my son and his wife. Have you not remarked that the days are less short than usual? I have heard it said for these three or four years past at Paris. The Ab.è Tétu spoke of it at the Observatory. Your brother is able to read to us by day light, at half past five o'clock, even at present.

Madame de Coulanges writes to me that the new Countess de La Fayette made a splendid appearance upon her bed of state.* The room was ornamented with beautiful tapestry, and the bed decorated with the mantle of the Order of the Garter—not to mention other trophies of family greatness—looking glasses, lustres, and fifty other fashionable things. A number of attendants, valet de chambres, servants in fine liveries—the bride magnificent in her dress—in short, every thing so splendid that our Madame de La Fayette must be extremely happy to see her son make so great and honourable an alliance—but she, alas, was very ill during this great display of finery. A dreadful disorder in her stomach had brought her to the point of death—and two bleedings reduced her amazingly. At length, how-

* The manner in which brides received their visits of ceremony.

ever, I hear the fever has left her, and her friends enjoy some degree of comfort.

The beautiful Duchess de Lude has had all her fine silver furniture broken up; but as the pieces are very valuable, she has received for them twenty seven thousand crowns, and with that sum she has bought fashionable furniture, mirrors, lustres, &c. In short, she has got about the value of two thousand crowns of this holy poverty. Adieu, I shall write more on Sunday, when I expect to hear from you.

Sunday, January 1, 1690.

I HAVE not received your packet of the 17th—I know what is my due, and cannot be cheated without feeling a great and real vexation. I have a great deal to answer to the tragical and surprising story you have told me of poor Lausier. Your description is so animated, that I uttered a scream while reading it, which alarmed your brother, and he was as much moved as myself when he read your account, particularly as he knew the poor man extremely well. We admired together the uncertainty of the hour and manner of our death. All the circumstances of this one, are affecting and singular—the continual dangers to which he had formerly been exposed—the last seige of Mayence to which he went in so romantic a manner—the good

fortune with which he escaped—his amazing strong constitution—and the conversation in which he had laughed at the Dean's weak one—the appointment which M. de Noailles had made with him—and to which he failed going, as by the hand of God that struck him in the street (no remedy being allowed to take effect) and caused him to expire in the arms of his brothers' who loved him, and just at the moment when they were full of joy at seeing him again. All this is so affecting and striking, that although it is not the first sudden death we have heard of, yet it appears more surprising than any other in the annals of time. We are as much occupied with this event as you are. I am going to write to the poor brothers. I think we do nothing else—this is the third brother they have lost. I long to hear if the Marquis has good winter quarters—I am anxious also to know how he will acquit himself at Paris, and at Court, of all his duties. He has a great many friends to visit. I have desired Beaulieu to send me many particulars concerning him, and to tell me exactly how much his figure is improved.

I can conceive the abundance of needless words with which you honoured Madame L'Abbesse's departure. I rejoice that she did not take Paulina with her. I often think of that dear and pleasing little creature with much tenderness.

LETTER CCCLXVII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, January 8 1690.

IT is by passing through your hands, my dear child, that my letters become valuable, for when they go out of mine, they appear so heavy and full of words, that I often say my daughter will not have time to read all this—but you have made me perfectly easy, too much so perhaps. I do not believe that I ought to credit all the civil things you say of my letters—so much praise is dangerous—take care of what you do; yet I will confess that I value your approbation beyond that of the whole world.

I must talk to you, my dear child, of our readings, which continue with more perseverance than ever. When we meet with any excellent reasoning we think it a sin to read it without you, and exclaim, how charmed my *daughter* would be with this, how it would please my *sister*. Thus do we mix a remembrance of you with our pleasures, and with every thing that is good. I pity you because you do not love history—that taste is the greatest resource against *ennui*. There are some so fine that one is glad to be transported to ages that are past,

and from them to acquire knowledge. It is the want of such books that makes Pere Cotton be read. I wish you had not inspired your son with the same distaste to reading history, which in his profession is so absolutely necessary.

I hear that Corbinelli is more mystical than ever; he made me buy a book of Malaval's, of which your brother and I cannot understand one word—in short, he is just as you have always known him—he never writes to me, that taste is quite gone off. I hear of him, and having quite writing enough we have agreed to love each other without the assistance of letters. As for delicate constitutions they deserve to be confided in, and I frankly confess that after the situations in which I have seen Mademoiselle de Meri, I believe her immortal; and when I consider Madame de La Fayette's good sense, and her excellent management of her health, I flatter myself that she may yet conquer all her complaints. God grant it—she is a valuable friend worthy of all our esteem and affection. I must now talk of my health, which from its perfection ought to make us tremble. I was yesterday a long time in my charming walks—the weather was as mild as in September—I never lose those fine days, but the moment the weather changes I remain in my chamber. In that I am altered, and no longer make a foolish vow of going out every day.

My daughter-in-law is at Rennes for a few days,

to assist at a relation's taking the veil—it vexes her much—she has sent her toilet to the mint, to do like other people. Your brother desires his kindest love to you.

LETTER CCCLXVIII.

To the same.

At the Rocks, January 25, 1690.

I PITY you, my dear child, for being obliged to read such stupid letters; but I should pity you still more if you were to remember their contents. It would be curious if you were to do as you did at the Convent. ‘I have been told that two of M. de Sévigné’s mares had escaped, and were running about quite wild.’ This is to teach us not to allow young creatures to stray from their guardians—that is for you sweet Paulina. ‘I am told that the sun set in a dreadful cloud in December,’ which is to teach you my sisters that you must not walk at that season. This is what I remember of the fine letters you admire, and this is all the moral you can draw from them.

Our Marquis is to be at Paris on the 22d. I hear that it is expected he will be surprised to find as soon as he arrives an order to set out for Grignan—

but I have too good an opinion of him to doubt his being glad to go to you. Supposing that was not exactly the case, and that the age of eighteen should make him regret a little the Carnival at Paris, still the consideration of his youth would make me approve of his going to seek instruction in the midst of his family. He is in a situation where he must not remain a child—and I have my doubts whether a little childishness is not yet to be found in the young Colonel. He is not *done enough*, as Madame de La Fayette says a little more *boiling* by the side of your fire will do him all the good in the world. How happy you will be to embrace the dear boy again. You say nothing of the Chevalier's health—perhaps it is a good sign—I want to rejoice with him that M. de Beauvilliers after having nine daughters has had the wit to beget a son. He followed Guitaut's advice, for if he had done like a desperate gamester, *changed his cards*, he would not have had an heir—that fancy amused me much. Adieu for the present, we have had a great deal of snow these two days past. It is the first time I have seen any thing to remind me of winter. My daughter-in-law is at Rennes, detained by the fall of snow

Sunday, January 29:

I HAVE not received your letters, which vexes and worries without surprising me. I am more astonished, as seeing couriers arrive in such deplorable weather; the waters are much out, and my daughter-in-law, tired of remaining at Rennes, ventured to return, and was bold enough to ford a river on horseback; the water was so deep that her horse swam a little way. Instead of being well received by us all after that fine action, we scolded her well. She might have absolutely been drowned, and we, who know what that is, cannot forgive her having run such a risk. She thinks that in consideration of her danger you will excuse her having left me three weeks. She did it with so much reluctance that she deserves pardon.

I heard sooner than you did, that the Marquis arrived at Paris in good health. If he was to wait there till your answer arrived from Grignan, the Carnival will be over. You have not told me at what game the treasurer of your province has ruined himself. As for our poor d'Hariouis, it has been entirely by his desire of obliging every body—that was his mania—he found it impossible to refuse, which proves at least that the best qualities may be as pernicious as the worst, when they are not regulated by good sense. This fault however is so rare, that there will not be another example of so complete

a ruin founded upon such principles. You did wisely, my dear child, in remaining at Grignan—that is really consulting one's conscience—those who robbed Madame de La Fayette, paid little attention to theirs. They have taken from our poor friend, weak and ill as she is, the value of five hundred crowns in Louis d'Ors, which were in a small closet, to which no one had access but her two women, her valet de chambre, and her footman—she cannot suspect either of those—they have all been interrogated, and nothing discovered. Thus she remains surrounded with these four persons, and that is her greatest misfortune; for the loss of money is a trifle to her, whose children are so opulent—but to find herself attended by those who have made so free with her property, is a torment to a person already overcome with bodily infirmities.

I wish you as much health as I enjoy. We have very good milk, from which we take the cream and mix with it coffee, and sugar. It is a very nice thing and will be a treasure in Lent. This is the coffee and cream, or cream and coffee of our friend Alliot. Here, my dear child, is the chit chat of a person who has no letter of yours to answer, who, like the pigeons* in La Fontaine, *sees nothing*—

* See the fable of Les Deux Pigeons.

but my thoughts are with you all at Grignan—you occupy all my ideas. I nurse and pity the Chevalier. I converse with the Count, whom I love better than he loves himself. I play with Paulina, I make reflections with M. de La Garde, I trim the prelates a little, I sigh with the dean, I expect the Marquis, and above all, I passionately love my dear daughter. I praise her sound judgment, her excellent management, and heartily wish her a continuation of fortitude.

LETTER CCCLXIX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, Ash Wednesday, 1690.

BEFORE I talk of any thing else, tell me quickly why Madame de La Rénie* is again with you. Do you send for her from Paris to Grignan to speak to you as you used to do from the next street formerly, or does she think the distance no more than from Paris to Livry. I cannot imagine what has made her undertake this second journey to Grignan—no wonder that she has pains *all, all over her*. The dear little lively Paulina takes her

* A shop-keeper from Paris.

off, you say, most inimitably. Mimickry is not a talent I mean to praise, but in an innocent degree it amuses; her brother has a taste for it also, but he is now otherwise employed—he is busy in preparing his camp equipage. You will hear by the Abbé Bigorre how little he attends to the Carnival. He has really a degree of solidity which surprises me—he eats in a moderate economical way at Poiriers. I wish he would go sometimes to Madame de Coulanges, who is alone, she would be delighted to see him. But what do you say to this company for which you cannot find a purchaser? How can such a good thing remain upon your hands? It proves sufficiently that there is no money. If your roads are as completely destroyed as ours, I pity M. de La Garde—all visits are at an end in this province—but my dear Countess, how is your health? Your last account was from your bed where you pretended you only staid to be nursed in your turn—still, however, those cholics are painful—they are a real malady—you have pain *all, all over you*, like Madame La Rénie. I am diverted with Paulina's being distressed at the line in the Miserere, which says *my mother conceived me in sin*. It is indeed a serious subject of reflection and leads to important consequences.

You and I have a kind of quarrel together—you say that I have read some novels three times over, that is really affronting; for it is an old sin which

ought to have been forgotten in consideration of the advantages it gave me of being able to read more than once the best books in the world. More good than evil certainly arises from that docility of temper which enables me to do honour to what is good, and allows me to occupy agreeably some hours of my life with less serious readings. In a word, my dear child, I could wish you possessed of the same quality; and now let us embrace each other, since after all we must be reconciled before Easter. I ask Paulina how she has passed her Carnival; she is in the age when that time is felt. I have had company which suited me extremely, since they played at cards, and left me my liberty. Yesterday, without any appearance of preparation, my daughter-in-law left the room for a few minutes before supper, and soon after the servant appeared to announce it, in a masquerade dress. We went into the supper-room and found my daughter-in-law, with all our people, in fancy dresses. It was a very pretty masquerade; the dresses so singular, and their effect so much heightened by our surprise, that altogether we were extremely amused. After supper they all danced, till twelve o'clock struck, and Lent began. Do you remember some of these festivals which we passed together? I love to think of you at all seasons. Adieu, you are beloved by those who dwell here, and I love and honour all those that are at Grignan.

LETTER CCCLXX.

To the same.

At the Rocks, February 19, 1690.

IF you saw me, my dear child, you would order me to keep Lent; having not one complaint, you would be convinced as I am, that God had given me such perfect health only that I may obey the ordinances of the Church. We keep an excellent table, although we have not the river Sorgue,* but we have the sea, consequently fish is not wanting—every week we have butter from Prévalaie; I relish and eat it like a true native of Brittany. We eat a great deal of bread and butter—your brother imprints all his teeth in the butter—and what pleases me exceedingly is, that I can still imprint all mine. We shall soon put violets and fine herbs upon our bread and butter—we shall have spinnage, and in short, so many excellent things that we cannot be said to fast—but why do you abuse our coffee and cream? It is because you hate milk, otherwise it is the pleasantest thing in the world—but enough of Lent.

* A river remarkably full of fish in the Comtat Venaissin.

I believe your son's Company is sold. It is true that the Marquis is a stout fellow, but by no means black like Bouffleurs. I cannot bear the comparison, except it were to be in their fortunes. I wish we knew a little how his first visit to Versailles past off, whether the King took any notice of him by a friendly nod or some little word. It is upon those occasions that a father or an uncle are much wanted. I send you some of Mademoiselle de Scudery's verses, let me know your opinion of them. They are said to be her *farewell*, and that she is gently going* with M. de Montausier. We must think of that journey when we have lived so long; nothing brings it more to our recollection than reading and seeing a number of younger people die—it is the common destiny.

Wednesday, February 22, 1690.

THE letter you have written to the Abbé Charrier, is a master piece of its kind; it was a difficult one since a subject was wanting; but you have managed in perfection—every word strikes—I dare say you are not aware of the excellence of your performance; but I do it justice. Nothing could arrive more apropos to help me to thank the Abbé for a very great piece of service which he has done

* Mademoiselle de Scudery died in 1701, aged 94 years.

for me in Lower Brittany. I shall think him paid when he receives your letter.

M. de Chaulnes has written me a long and kind letter from Rome, and complains that I abandon him in his solitude. I tell him I have had no time to write, and fifty other follies in that style. You will see by the Abbé Bigorre's account, that to all those difficult negociations a very happy termination is expected, and that what would have been thought impossibilities to another Ambassador, will be easy to M. de Chaulnes, who is so perfectly accustomed to the chicanery of Rome. The Cardinal d'Estrees is just come from Turin—it is said that he talks of the Pope, but says not a word of M. de Chaulnes—that appears to me as difficult as playing at the game at which you are not to say either yes or no.

I send a thousand kind remembrances to M. de Grignan. I flatter myself that if he was here he would be tempted to walk from the variety of our alleys, which would amuse him. I cannot tell you how tenderly I love you, or how necessary your affection is to the happiness of my life.

LETTER CCCLXXI.

To the same.

At the Rocks, February 26, 1690.

I NEVER expected to weep as I have done over poor La Chan; but it is impossible to read your description of his wife's affliction without being exceedingly affected. His misfortune was fixed by an order of Providence—it was a destiny that nothing could prevent. The poor man was anxious to arrive—his hurry would not let him listen to the good advice that was given him. In vain did his friends try to persuade him not to go into the boat—no, he is deaf to every thing; he embarks, and faithful to the appointed hour, death waited for him upon the Rhone—there he was to be, and there he must perish. Good God, my dear child, how all that was arranged. Every body sees their own story in his accident, and in his wife's distress, as we are liable to the same calamities—it is selfishness that makes us weep while we fancy we shed tears for the sorrows of others—Christianity makes us first think of this poor man's salvation;* but his wife will feel

* Alluding to his dying without having confessed himself.

grieved afterwards, at having lost four thousand francs, which were sewed up in the lining of the unfortunate man's coat. Perhaps the fury of the Rhone will have thrown the dead body beyond Arles on some solitary spot; in that case Providence will dispose of that gold as of every thing else.

I approve of your not sending for the Marquis to Grignan; it would be a great expence and a fatiguing journey for him merely to satisfy your affection—but make that one sacrifice more, and rather wait till he is Brigadier, or Marshal, before you make him run about.

Let me talk to you of the Cardinal de Forbin—the courier that brought the news arrived a week ago—the new Cardinal was delighted. The King is extremely pleased with his Embassador—it is probable that he will do all the miracles that can be done at Rome. Madame de Chaulnes writes to me in a triumphant style, and she has reason. Let me beg of you to write to the new Cardinal; I have done it, and you must not fail. Remember *no enemies*, my dear child; make a maxim of that thought which is good policy as well as a Christian duty. I not only say *no enemies*, but *many friends*—you felt the advantage of that maxim in your law suit. You have a son, and may want those whom at this moment you think can never be useful to you. That is a great mistake—look at Madame de La Fayette who is rich in friends every where, and of all con-

ditions ; she has a hundred arms that reach to every place. Her children feel the advantage of it and thank her every day for having made her temper so complying. It is an obligation she has to the Duke de La Rochefoucault, and it has made the fortune of her family. I am sure that of late years you think as I do upon this subject.

You explain to me perfectly Madame de La Recnie's visit—what a curious thing to leave Paris, her husband, and all her business, to run about during two or three months in Provence asking money, not receiving any, fatiguing herself, and at last returning home at a great expence with a bad rheumatism into the bargain. So it is that at last you are rid of her.

Let me know if you are satisfied with your Maitre d'Hotel ; he is a person of consequence in your great Castle. I want to know news of the Count's journey, and if the treasurer will do what he wishes. Here are many questions, for which I beg your pardon ; you are too amiable in being so fond of my letters. When you receive three at a time you say you are rich ; yet how fatiguing—my letters are too long to attempt answering. Adieu my dearest, how do you bear Lent ? As for me I am perfectly well. I took this morning some coffee and milk, of which I am not yet tired any more than of sermons, for we read none but of the best sort. We have pleasant weather, no more winter,

and a hope of spring which is better than spring itself.

The preceding Letter is the last of the correspondence between Madame de Sévigné and her daughter; it is evident however that many more have existed, since Madame de Sévigné did not leave Brittany to join her daughter in Provence till September, or October, 1690, as may be seen by the following Letter of Madame de La Fayette to her.]

LETTER CCCLXXII.

Madame de La Fayette to Madame de Sévigné.

Paris, September 20, 1690.

YOU have received my answer before I have received your letter. You saw by Madame de Lavardin's and mine, that we wished you to go to Provence, since you would not come to Paris. It is certainly the best thing you can do—the climate is beautiful, and you will have company, independant of your daughter, which is sufficient alone—a large house with every convenience—in short, it is living to be there. I praise and admire M. de Sévigné, since he consents to lose you, forgetting his own interest in yours. If I was in a writing humour

I would make him a compliment upon the occasion. Set out as soon as possible, and let me know what towns you mean to pass through, and as near as possible at what time, and you shall meet with some of my letters. I am tormented with vapours of the most painful and depressing kind. I must suffer with patience since it is the will of God. It is from the bottom of my heart that I approve of your journey to Provence—I say it with sincerity—Madame de Lavardin and I had thought of it before we heard it was your intention.

LETTER CCCLXXIII.

*Madame de La Fayette to Madame de Sévigné
at Grignan.*

Paris, September 19, 1691.

MY health is a little better than it was, that is to say, I have less vapours. I have no other ill, therefore cease to be uneasy about me. I have nothing to dread but falling into a decline, which will not be the business of a day—therefore my good friend, have no fears for my life; you will have time enough to be prepared, unless indeed some unexpected accident, to which we are all subject terminates my existence—and I am certainly more

of a mortal than my neighbours. A person in full health appears to me a prodigy. The Chevalier de Grignan nurses me, and I have a great affection for him. The Duchess of Chaulnes I saw yesterday—she has a thousand attentions for me. My daughter-in-law miscarried a week after being brought to bed of a daughter—such an event has happened to many women—her child is well—they will have but too many. Our poor friend Croiselles is still at St. Gratien; he tells me he is vastly well. If you could but see him, you would have an idea of what he calls being well—we are quite distressed about him. The Abbè Tètu is gone into the country. We rather suspect it is to La Trappe—the good old Madame L'Avocat is very ill; indeed she has been a pretty long time in this world. Adieu my dear friend, I am entirely yours, and devoted to all the good company around you.

LETTER CCCLXXIV.

The same to the same.

Paris, September 26, 1691.

COME to Paris for my sake, my dear friend ; the very thought has alarmed me—God preserve me from deranging you thus ; although I ardently wish to see you, it would be purchasing the pleasure at too dear a rate if it was at the expence of your comfort. I sent you a week ago the real state of my health—I was perfectly well, and have been, as by a miracle, a fortnight without any vapours ; that is to say cured of all my ills. These three days past I have not been so well—the sight of a sealed up letter which I did not open brought back all my vapours. I am like a person under the influence of enchantment, but after dinner I am more like the rest of the world. A month or two ago that was my worst hour—now it is my best—but to return to your journey to Paris, be assured it is one of my favourite dreams. I imagine nothing that can be more agreeable to me than the delight of seeing you ; but to make me enjoy it completely the journey must accord with Madame de Grignan's affairs and with your own. It appears to me however that setting aside interest, you would do very well to

come together, but I cannot sufficiently express how sensibly I feel your offer of coming alone upon my account. I shall write to you more fully very soon.

LETTER CCCLXXV.

Madame de Sévigné to Monsieur de Coulanges.

Lambesc, December 1, 1691.

HOW are we together my amiable cousin? It is an age since I have heard from you. I wrote to you from the Rocks and have not had a line in answer. I must then begin our correspondence again now that I am in your neighbourhood.* What do you say to my courage? There is nothing like having a great deal. After passing sixteen months in Brittany with my son, I thought I owed a visit to my daughter, knowing that she would not be able to return to Paris this winter; and I have been received with such unfeigned pleasure by her and M. de Grignan, that if I suffered any fatigue in the journey I have entirely forgotten it, and feel nothing but the happiness of finding my-

* Monsieur de Coulanges was at Rome with the Duke de Chaulnes.

self with them. This excursion was approved of by Madame de Chaulnes, and Madame de La Fayette, those friends whose advice I generally ask; therefore nothing was wanting to my comfort. You however will be able still to add something to it by making Grignan in your way, where we are now going to wait for you.

The Assembly of States in this province is closed. We are detained here till M. de Grignan is well enough to go to Grignan—he has been five or six days extremely ill with cholic and fever. The illness was coming to an alarming height when it was miraculously stopped by the bark—remember that it is as good for complaints in the bowels as for fever.

We mean to pass through Aix to see my dear little Nun, and then we shall settle ourselves at Grignan for the winter. We expect to see the young Colonel, whose regiment is at Valence—he will pass six weeks with us—alas how quickly will that time fly! I begin to sigh heavily when I reflect upon its rapidity—I see and feel its consequences.

I hardly dare talk to you of your removal from your old house to the Temple. It is a serious affliction to me, and I lament it for your sake and mine. I hate the Temple as much as I love the Goddess who means to reside there. I hate that part of the town, and even that view of the country

which Madame de Coulanges admires so much ; it is a kind of false prospect which makes one less sensible to a real one—in short, I dislike every thing in it and have had the incivility to tell your wife so. I found Paulina extremely amiable, very much as you had described her to me. Let me hear from you soon, tell me all your news. I am going to wait for you at Grignan with great impatience and the truest friendship.

LETTER CCCLXXVI.

Madame de Grignan to Monsieur de Coulanges.

Grignan, December 17, 1691.

YES, we are together ; my dear mother and I are in each other's arms enjoying all the happiness of meeting again and all the comforts of mutual affection. She has had the courage to come from one end of France to the other to see me—she alone was capable of such an enterprize. You gave your approbation to her attempting it ; my dear cousin, receive my thanks and my consent to your returning to Paris. You tell me you have hopes of obtaining leave of absence, and M. de Chaulnes informs me that you are sure of it. Dont plague yourself with bringing a dog for Paulina ; we do not

chuse to love any thing here but rational creatures. Cartesians as we are, we do not like to be troubled with those *machines*, unless indeed they could be *wound up* to excessive cleanliness; without that they are insupportable. Adieu my dear cousin, I am heating my apartments as much as possible, since coming from Rome every thing will appear iced to you, even our conversations if you have enjoyed that of Madame de Nevers.

LETTER CCCLXXVII.

Madame de Coulanges to Madame de Sévigné at Grignan.

Paris, October 29, 1694.

I HEARD yesterday that your marriage* was again in a proper train; that is to say, that conditions had been offered to Madame de Grignan, of which she could not fail to approve. I therefore conclude that the marriage is determined upon, and

* The marriage of the young Marquis de Grignan with Mademoiselle de St. Amand, which took place shortly after, at Grignan. He died without issue, consequently the title was extinct; the Count de Grignan's brothers (except the Chevalier, who never married) being all in the church.

rejoice with you, my dear friend, upon the occasion.

The King is at Choisi, where he remains till Saturday; every body is returning to Paris. Madame de Villeroi sat off yesterday to spend her winter at Versailles. *We* seemed to *think* we were very sorry to part. By the by, I have seen the most beautiful thing you can imagine; it is a picture of Madame de Maintenon, painted by Mignard; she is in the dress of Saint Frances. It is rather a flattering likeness, but not too much so; no quantity of red and white, no air of youth, yet without those advantages, Mignard has made a countenance so charming, that it is beyond description. The eyes are exceedingly animated; there is a gracefulness in the air of the head; in short, no picture can exceed it. Mignard has also made a good resemblance of the King. Mademoiselle de Villarceaux is dead without having had time to confess herself, or to disinherit her cousins. Adieu my dear friend.

LETTER CCCLXXVIII.

Madame de Sévigné to Monsieur de Coulanges.

Grignan, October 15, 1695.

I HAVE been writing to our good Duke and Duchess de Chaulnes; but I excuse your reading the letters as they are extremely bad. I defy you with all your wit, and all your stops, to make any thing good out of them; therefore let them alone. Besides I write to the Duchess upon some little affairs which are far from entertaining. The best thing you could do for me at present, my dear cousin, would be to send us some slight particles of your spirits, and all the strength, gaiety, and health, that you can spare from the abundance you possess, and teach me how to transfuse this treasure into my daughter's machine. She has now been three months suffering from a dreadful malady, which although declared not to be dangerous, is in my eyes the most distressing and melancholy that can be imagined. I own to you that the sight of her situation kills me, and that I am scarcely able to bear the many bad nights her illness occasions. She was latterly so bad, that the physician had recourse to bleeding at the arm, a strange remedy for a disease where the loss of blood was al

ready too great. In the midst of her weakness and sufferings nothing can exceed her patience and fortitude. If she could recover her strength we would immediately set out for Paris; it is what we wish—we should then have the pleasure of introducing the young Marchioness de Grignan, of whom you can have an agreeable idea from M. de Chaulne's description. In the mean time, my dear cousin, preserve for us your accustomed friendship, unworthy as we are of it from our extreme dulness. We must love our friends with all their faults—it is a great one to be sick—God preserve you from it my good friend. I write to Madame de Coulanges in the same plaintive style. How can I help being as much out of spirits as my poor daughter is out of health, seeing the alteration in her looks as I do every hour. Your wife is happy to be out of this scrape. I think mothers ought not to live long enough to see their children decline. I complain of this most humbly to Providence.

Madame de Sévigné was seized at Grignan with her last illness on the 6th of April, 1696. A continued fever caused her death the fourteenth day at the age of 70 years and two months. The two following Letters will prove how sincerely she was regretted by her daughter and son-in-law.

LETTER CCCLXXIX.

Madame de Grignan to Monsieur de Moulceau.

Grignan, April 18, 1696.

YOUR politeness need not make you fear renewing my grief by talking to me of the deplorable loss I have recently sustained—it is a subject that cannot be one instant effaced from my mind, and is so engraven upon my heart that nothing can either increase or diminish it. I am persuaded, my dear Sir, that you could not hear of my misfortune without great affliction. The natural goodness of your heart would make you feel for me—but you also have lost the most faithful of friends, whose incomparable merit can scarcely be equalled; nothing is more worthy of your regret; but I, alas, what have I not lost? In my excellent

mother every perfection was united. To me she was in every character invaluable—a loss so complete, so irreparable, does not allow me to seek consolation in any thing but tears and lamentations. I have not yet strength enough to look up to Heaven from whence all comfort flows. I can only turn my eyes around me, where every object tells me I shall see no more the parent who loaded me with favours, whose society was so charming, and who every day gave me new proofs of her attachment; certainly it requires a fortitude more than human to bear so cruel a separation and such heavy privations. So far from being prepared for this calamity, the perfect health which my mother enjoyed, and an illness of a year which had reduced me to the point of death, had made me almost hope that the order of Nature would be inverted in our case. I flattered myself too much—I flattered myself that I should never suffer this terrible misfortune—it *has* fallen upon me and I feel it in all its magnitude. I deserve your pity and some share in your friendship, if it can be deserved by the greatest veneration for your virtues.

LETTER CCCLXXX.

The Count de Grignan to Monsieur de Mouleau.

Grignan, May 23, 1696.

YOU can comprehend better than any body the greatness of the loss we have made, and the excess of my affliction. Madame de Sévigné's distinguished merit was well known to you—in her it is not only a mother-in-law that I lament (that name does not always imply affection) but an amiable and solid friend, and the most charming companion in the world. What renders her more than ever the object of our admiration and regret, is the courage with which she saw the approach of death (of which she never doubted from the first days of her illness) she saw it advance with surprising submission and fortitude. That woman, tender even to weakness, when those she loved were in danger, called forth all the resources of sense and religion when herself was in question. In this we see the importance and use of filling the mind with excellent reflections, and reading the best books upon religious subjects, and for such Madame de Sévigné had a decided taste. I tell you, these particulars, my dear Sir, because I know they will be acceptable to such feelings as yours, and to the friendship you professed for her

we so sincerely lament, and I confess that my mind is so full of the subject that it is a sort of relief to write to you, who are so deeply interested in this melancholy event.

I flatter myself that the remembrance of that dear friend, whose affection for you was so great, will contribute to ensure me the continuation of the friendship with which you have so long honoured me. I value it too highly, and wish for it too ardently, not to in some degree deserve it.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

GRIGNAN.

LETTER CCCLXXXI.

*Monsieur de Coulanges to Madame de Semiane. **

Paris, April 25, 1696.

MADAM,

FAR from being displeased or offended at your not having written to me with your own hand, I am only surprised that you should have thought of me at so painful and dreadful a moment. I have

* Paulina de Grignan, so often mentioned in Madame de Sevigne's Letters. She was married to the Marquis de Semiane early in the year 1696; she lived to see her grand-

no doubt of your feeling most acutely our general loss. I can conceive the sufferings of a heart as good and affectionate as yours. Good God what a stroke for us all! As for me I cannot divest myself of the melancholy thought that I shall never again see that dear cousin to whom I have been so tenderly attached since my earliest youth, and who returned my affection with the utmost warmth and constancy. If you could see all that passes here you would be more than ever convinced of Madame de Sévigné's merit—never was one more generally acknowledged. She is regretted by the public with all the respect due to her many virtues. Madame de Coulange's affliction exceeds all bounds, and we are extremely uneasy lest it should materially affect her health. Since the fatal day on which we learned your excellent grand-mother's illness, we have been deprived of all comfort. Madame de Chaulnes was half killed with the news of her friend's death—in short, we meet together merely to weep and lament our loss. Amongst our sorrows, anxiety for Madame de Grignan's health is not the least. Do not write to me, but let one of your attendants give us some account of the family at Grignan.

mother's Letters published in 1734: Madame de Semiane inherited all her father's fortune, her brother having died young and without posterity.

Alas what a melancholy scene has passed in your royal Castle. We are uneasy concerning that amiable Mademoiselle de Martillac, who has acquitted herself so extremely well of all the duties of a tender and true friend.

The following Letter written by Marie de Vichy, Marchioness de Ferrand, in the name of Madame de Sévigné, was sent to Mr. Walpole (late Lord Orford) after his return from Paris in 1765, with a round white snuff box; upon the top was a picture of Madame de Sévigné in miniature—at the bottom the cypher of Rabutin and Sévigné in marcasites. She is supposed to write from the Elysian fields.

Madame de Sévigné to Mr. Walpole. Translated from the French.

Elysian fields, from whence there are no dates,
and where there is no succession of time.

I KNOW your wild passion for me and your enthusiasm for the place I once inhabited. I have been informed of the adoration you paid me there,* and am so penetrated with gratitude that I have obtained permission of my Soverigns to visit and remain with you for ever. I quit without regret these fortunate abodes, and prefer you to all its inhabitants. Enjoy the pleasure of seeing me, and do not complain that I am *but* a picture—it is the only state of existence allowed to departed spirits. I was permitted to chuse the age in which I would appear

* Mr. Walpole dined at Livry.

before you. I have fixed upon that of five and twenty, that I may be certain of remaining always an agreeable object in your eyes. Banish all fear of inconstancy—spirits, though light, have the advantage of being unchangeable. I have taken the least figure I could find, that I may never be separated from you. I will accompany you every where by sea and by land, in the city, and country; but I particularly request of you to take me to France. Let me visit again my native land, and chuse for your habitation the suburb of St. Germain; there *my* dearest friends resided, and there at present are to be found many of yours. You will introduce me to them, and I shall be glad to see whether they are worthy of being the rivals of

RABUTIN DE SÉVIGNÉ.

THE END.

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Letters from Mad. de Sbevign
be to her daughter, the Cou
ntess of Grignan.

